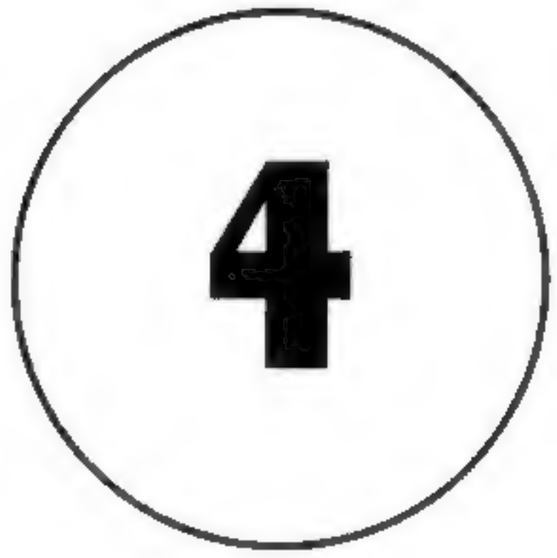
4
MATURE CONTENT
SUZUKA
KOUJI SEO

# SUZUKA





**Kouji Seo**

TRANSLATED AND ADAPTED BY

**David Ury**

LETTERED BY

**North Market Street Graphics**



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# A Note from the Author

*LATELY I'VE BEEN SO DAMNED BUSY THAT I NEVER ACTUALLY GO TO SLEEP. I JUST PASS OUT! I NEVER EVEN MAKE IT TO MY FUTON. THAT KIND OF MAKES ME SOUND LIKE I'M A BUSY, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OR SOMETHING, BUT THE TRUTH IS, I'M JUST ALWAYS LATE FOR MY DEADLINES.*

# SUZUKA

4

Kouji Seo

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HE'S DEAD, SUZUKA, AND THINK-ING ABOUT HIM ALL THE TIME...

...ISN'T GONNA BRING HIM BACK.

BUT...

# SUZUKA

## #23 KAZUKI

I FEEL LIKE TIME HAS JUST BEEN STANDING STILL...

...EVER SINCE THAT DAY...

THREE YEARS EARLIER.

SEP-TEM-BER.

NAGISA JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

THANKS.

STARTING TOMORROW I'LL HAVE TO DEVOTE ALL MY TIME TO STUDYING FOR THE ENTRANCE EXAMS.

WELL, I JUST WANTED TO SAY THAT YOU'VE BEEN A GREAT CAPTAIN, SENPAI.

LUCKILY I'VE GOT SOME DEPENDABLE PEOPLE LIKE YOU AROUND. I KNOW I'M LEAVING THE TEAM IN GOOD HANDS.

I WANT YOU TO LEAD THE HIGH JUMPERS.

YES, SIR.

H-1

H-3

HUH?

HMMPH.

WHAT? SHE'S NOT READY YET, SENPAI.

SUZUKA ASAHINA
SEVENTH GRADE
(AGE THIRTEEN)

IF YOU PUT HER IN CHARGE, THE WHOLE TEAM WILL FALL APART.

SUZUKAZE CAN'T HANDLE THE PRESSURE.

KAZUKI TSUDA
EIGHTH GRADER
(AGE FOURTEEN)

NOT THIS AGAIN!

WHY DOES HE KEEP CALLING ME SUZUKAZE?

. . . . . .

THIS LOSER...?

FWICK

I MEAN WHY SHOULD THIS LOSER BE CAPTAIN? WHAT ABOUT MIYAMOTO-SENPAI?

THAT'S JUST WRONG!

WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT IT, TSUDA-SENPAI? WHY DON'T YOU JUST STICK TO SPRINT-ING?

HEY, I'M THE TEAM CAPTAIN NOW!

YOU KNOW THAT, SUZUKA.

ON THIS TEAM, WE MAKE DECISIONS BASED ON ACHIEVE-MENT.

OF ALL OUR SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADERS, TSUDA WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO MADE IT TO THE NATIONALS.

. . . . . .

I'D SAY HE DESERVES TO BE CAPTAIN.

THAT'S RIGHT.

A LITTLE BEAN SPROUT LIKE MIYAMOTO COULD NEVER HANDLE IT.

BEAN SPROUT.

YOU DIDN'T EVEN MAKE IT PAST THE PREFECTURAL MEET, SO WHY DON'T YOU JUST KEEP YOUR MOUTH SHUT?

WHATEVER, TSUDA-SENPAI. DIDN'T YOU PRACTICALLY FINISH LAST IN THE NATIONALS?

SHUT UP.

WELL, STARTING TOMOR-ROW, YOU TWO BET-TER LEARN TO GET ALONG.

WHY DON'T YOU QUIT FIGHTING AND TRY WORKING TOGETHER FOR A CHANGE?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT US!

RIGHT, SUZU-KAZE?

MY NAME IS SU-ZUKA!

GOD! DOES HE EVER QUIT?

QUIT BEING SUCH A HARD-ASS!

COME ON! PRACTICE IS SUP-POSED TO BE FUN.

THE FOLLOW-ING DAY

WOO

WOO

MAYBE YOU SHOULD TRY TAKING PRACTICE A LITTLE MORE SERIOUSLY, SENPAI?

I DON'T SEE WHAT BUSINESS IT IS OF YOURS!

DO SOME-THING, MIYA-MOTO.

IT'S EVEN WORSE NOW THAT ALL THE NINTH GRADERS ARE GONE.

MAN, THOSE TWO REALLY DON'T GET ALONG.

HE'S THE CRAZY ONE, RIGHT, SENPAI?

HEY, MIYAMOTO! IS SHE CRAZY OR WHAT?

IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT.

THEY'VE JUST GOT DIFFERENT IDEAS ABOUT WHAT A TRACK TEAM SHOULD BE. DEBATE IS HEALTHY.

YOU'RE JUST AFRAID OF CON-FRONTA-TION.

YEAH, RIGHT.

SORRY, I'M JUST AN IM-PARTIAL OBSERV-ER.

HE ARGUED...

GOD, HE REALLY PISSES ME OFF!

WHY THE HELL DOES HE HAVE TO BE CAPTAIN?

HE WAS ALWAYS WASTING ALL OUR TEAM'S FUNDS.

WE DON'T NEED THAT MANY.

I BOUGHT TEN SETS OF START-ING BLOCKS.

PLUP

THEY'RE BETTER BOILED.

SAU-SAGES ARE MEANT TO BE GRILLED.

...WITH ME ABOUT EVERYTHING UNDER THE SUN.

...MAKE IT PAST THE PRE-FECTURAL MEET.

A PEN...

PRIZE

10

BUT I STILL COULDN'T...

HE ACTED LIKE SUCH A BIG SHOT JUST BECAUSE HE WAS FASTER THAN ANY-ONE ELSE ON THE TEAM.

HE MADE IT TO THE WINTER FINALS AGAIN IN EIGHTH GRADE.

1

THAT JERK!

I HATE HIM!

NATIONAL JUNIOR HIGH TRACK AND FIELD COMPETITION- KANAGAWA PREFECTURE PRELIMINARY

THEN I STARTED EIGHTH GRADE. IT WAS THE DAY OF THE SUMMER COMPETITION...

...CAN PROBABLY MAKE IT TO THE NATIONALS.

BUT YOU AND ASAHINA...

SO IT LOOKS LIKE IT'S JUST ME, MIYA-MOTO, AND SU-ZUKAZE IN THE PRE-FECTURIAL PRELIMS....

...AGAIN THIS YEAR.

OH YEAH? WHAT DO YOU KNOW, SENPAI?

WELL, I MIGHT BE ABLE TO, BUT SHE NEVER WILL.

GOOD WORK, BEAN SPROUT.

I BARELY EVEN QUALI-FIED.

UH...

I'VE SAID IT ONCE AND I'LL SAY IT AGAIN...

YOU ALWAYS CRACK UNDER PRESSURE. YOU GET SO NERVOUS THAT YOU JUST LOSE CONTROL.

THAT'S WHY YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT.

CLINK

WOO

WOO

AH, SORRY!

HEY, GET OUT OF THE WAY!

WOO

THAT'S THE SECOND MISS FOR NUMBER 16!

.....

HAHH

!?

HAHH

!

I'M THE ONLY HIGH JUMPER REPRESENTING MY SCHOOL, AND THIS IS THE BEST I CAN DO?

MY TIMING WAS TOTALLY OFF.

AND MY FORM WAS ALL OVER THE PLACE.

LOOKS LIKE ASAHINA WON'T MAKE IT PAST THE PRELIMINARIES.

I GUESS KAZUKI WAS RIGHT.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

THUMP THUMP

THUMP THUMP

THUMP THUMP

TH-THIS IS MY LAST CHANCE. IF I MISS THIS ONE, IT ALL ENDS HERE. NO CHANCE AT THE FINALS. NO NEW RECORDS.

*THAT'S WHY YOU'LL NEVER MAKE IT.*

BUT... I'VE GOT TO DO SOME-THING.

I KNOW!

?

SHIVER

HEY, SUZUKAZE!

AND NOW FOR NUMBER 16'S THIRD ATTEMPT.

OKAY.

16

25

20

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!

YOU CLEAR THAT HEIGHT IN PRACTICE EVERY DAY!

ONE, TWO. ONE, TWO.

CLAP

CLAP

CLAP

HEY, JUST FOLLOW MY RHYTHM!

TSU-TSUDA-SENPAI...

BEATS ME.

WHAT'S WITH HER?

UH, SORRY.

HEY! YOU WANT ME TO DIS-QUALIFY YOU?

KNOCK IT OFF! YOU'RE EMBAR-RASSING ME.

QUIT IT!

HUH?

GOD, HE'S SUCH AN IDIOT.

!!

.....

.....

!!

OKAY!

16

HURRY IT UP, NUMBER 16!

I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP. I CAN HANDLE THIS.

FWOOSH

16

NUMBER 16...

...HAS CLEARED THE BAR!

WOO HOO

OR THE PICTURE WILL LOOK WEIRD.

GET CLOSER, YOU GUYS!

QUIT BEING A BABY!

BUT...

SUMMER WAS NEARLY OVER.

...!!

7"

1

11"

YANK

I ENDED UP TAKING SIXTH PLACE.

CLICK

TSUDA-SENPAI RAN THE 100-METER DASH IN 10.82 SECONDS.

HE WAS HEADED FOR THE FINALS, BUT HE'D ALREADY BROKEN THAT YEAR'S NATIONAL RECORD WITH HIS TIME.

CLANK

カリ

ニ/ナ

OOF.

MISHI

AUGUST

WOW, YOU'RE ACTUALLY HELPING CLEAN UP. WHAT A RARE SIGHT.

PHEW! ALL DONE.

YEAH, WELL...

IT IS THE LAST DAY OF PRACTICE, SO...

OF COURSE... WE STILL HAVE THE NATIONALS TOMORROW.

THIS WILL BE MY LAST TIME AT THE NATIONALS, SO I HAVE TO TAKE FIRST PLACE.

I-I MEAN, YOU ALREADY HOLD THIS YEAR'S RECORD.

NO ONE CAN EVEN COME CLOSE TO YOUR TIME.

STEP

I'M SURE...

...YOU WILL, SENPAI.

HUH?

I MEAN, WE'RE TALKING ABOUT THE NATIONALS.

YEAH, BUT YOU CAN'T DEPEND ON NUMBERS AT A TIME LIKE THIS.

THE TRUTH IS, THE MOMENT I SET FOOT IN THE STADIUM, MY LEGS START SHAKING LIKE CRAZY.

RUMBLE

RUMBLE

I JUST GET THIS SUDDEN URGE TO RUN AWAY.

I KNOW I ALWAYS MAKE FUN OF YOU FOR LOSING YOUR COOL, BUT...

HUH?

REALLY?

RE...

. . . . . .

YOU MEAN... YOU FEEL THAT WAY, TOO, SENPAI?

OF COURSE I DO. WHAT DO YOU THINK I AM... A SUPER-HERO?

I-I DID THE BEST I COULD!

THAT WAS A NEW RECORD FOR ME!

THUNK

I CAN'T BELIEVE YOU ONLY CAME IN SIXTH.

THAT'S WHY I WAS OUT THERE TRYING TO GIVE YOU SUPPORT.

WHY? SO YOU COULD HAVE ME AROUND TO PICK ON?

WITH YOU?

I WAS HOPING YOU'D BE AT THE FINALS WITH ME.

HUH?

SUZUKA?

HEY, SUZUKA.

SIGH

WHA—?

I'M SORRY FOR THE WAY I'VE BEEN ACTING.

I ONLY MEANT TO GIVE YOU ADVICE, BUT...

IT JUST NEVER CAME OUT RIGHT.

I'VE ALWAYS...

...LOVED YOU...

.....

SO, DO YOU STILL HATE ME?

NO...

BLUSH

I...

I'M SORRY...

I DON'T...

...HATE YOU.

.....

WHAT? BUT...

THIS IS JUST SO SUDDEN.

ドキ THUMP

ドキ THUMP

YOU DON'T HAVE TO GIVE ME AN ANSWER RIGHT NOW.

TH-THEN...

WILL YOU... BE MY GIRL-FRIEND?

YOU CAN TELL ME...

...AFTER I COME BACK HOME FROM THE FINALS WITH THE FIRST-PLACE TROPHY.

AH...

FWOOSH

LATER!

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

I'VE NEVER EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT HIM IN THAT WAY.

I CAN'T BELIEVE HE ACTUALLY LIKES ME.

WHAT...

...SHOULD I TELL HIM?

1

...I LOST YOU, I FINALLY REALIZED HOW I FELT.

CLINK

THE DAY...

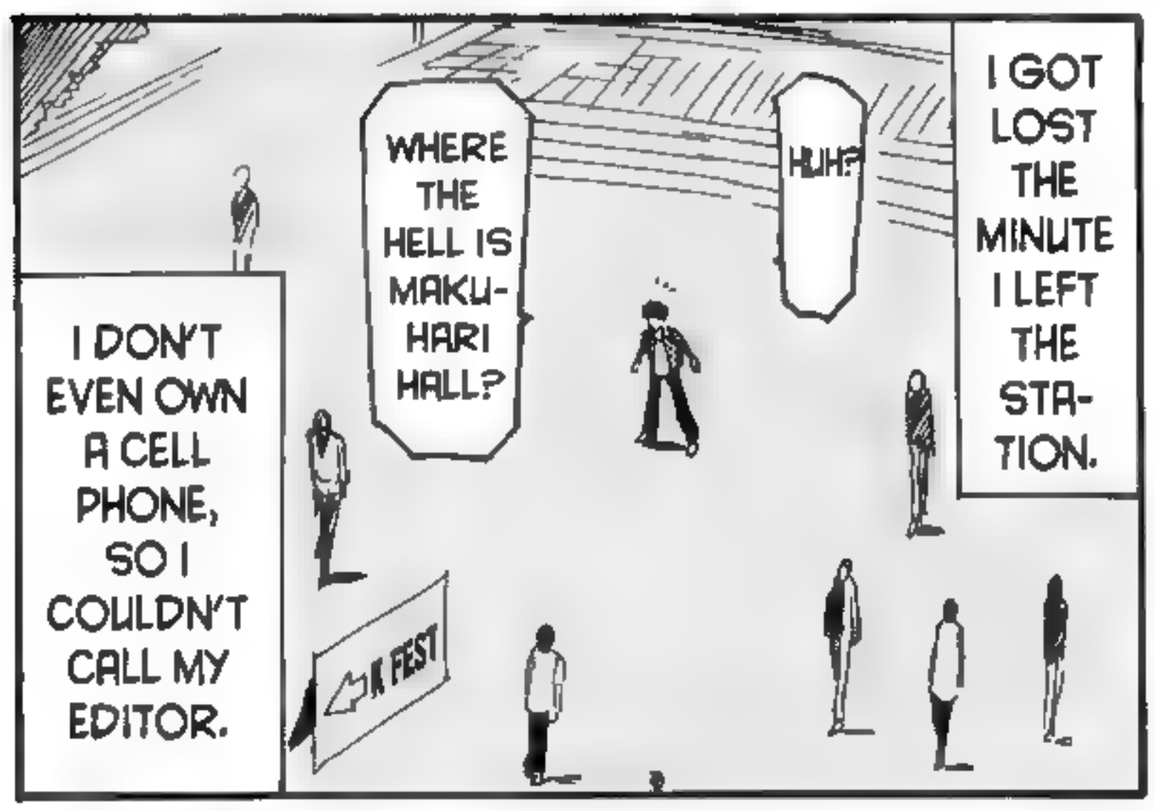
.....

BUT...

HOW AM I SUPPOSED TO TELL YOU THAT NOW?

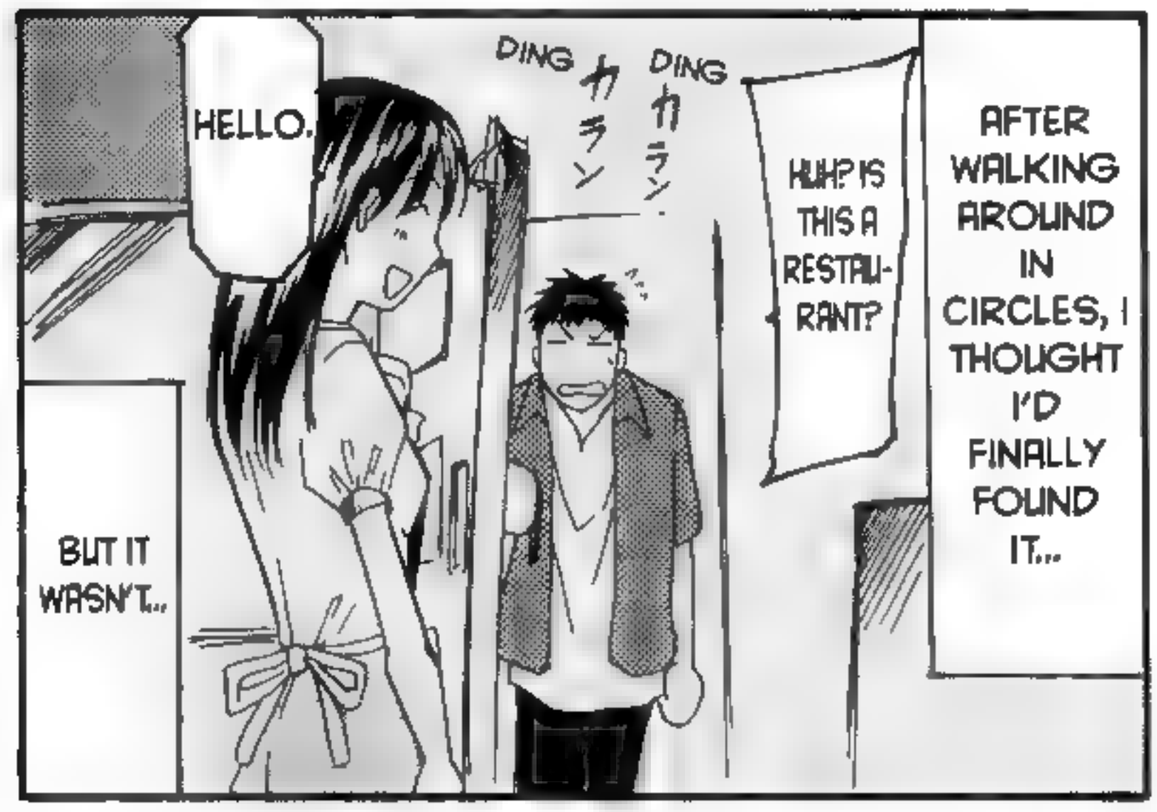
SENPAI...

TSUDA-SENPAI...


I GOT LOST THE MINUTE I LEFT THE STA-TION.
HUH?
WHERE THE HELL IS MAKU-HARI HALL?
I DON'T EVEN OWN A CELL PHONE, SO I COULDN'T CALL MY EDITOR.
K FEST

## SUZUKA FOUR-PANEL THEATER NUMBER THIRTEEN

## SEO GOES TO A SIGNING - PART 1


AFTER WALKING AROUND IN CIRCLES, I THOUGHT I'D FINALLY FOUND IT...
HUH? IS THIS A RESTAU-RANT?
DING カラン
DING カラン
HELLO.
BUT IT WASN'T..

THAT'S THREE DAYS IN A ROW, AND I HAVEN'T EVEN HEARD FROM HIM.

AKITSUKI SKIPPED MORNING PRACTICE AGAIN TODAY.

.....

I'M STARTING TO WORRY. HE'S SIGNED UP TO RUN IN TOMORROW'S REGIONAL MEET.

YEAH, THANKS, HASHIBA.

SHOULD I GO FIND HIM AFTER SCHOOL, SENPAI?

YEAH...

OKAY.

ASK HIM WHAT'S GOING ON.

# SUZUKA

## #24 FOOL

DING

DONG

DING

DONG

LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE TURNING BACK INTO AN OLD MAN AGAIN, AKITSUKI.

FOR A WHILE THERE, I THOUGHT THE TRACK TEAM MIGHT ACTUALLY PUMP SOME LIFE INTO YOU.

DID YOU SKIP...

...PRAC-TICE AGAIN TODAY?

.....

HEY, CAN YOU HEAR ME, GRAMPS?

AKITSUKI!

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING? YOU'D BETTER GET YOUR ASS TO PRACTICE!

HASHIBA...

YOU WERE CHOSEN TO REPRESENT OUR SCHOOL.

YOU'D BETTER GET YOUR SHIT TOGETHER.

WHAT? BUT THE OTHER DAY, YOU SAID YOU WERE GONNA RUN IN THE REGIONALS.

SORRY, BUT...I JUST DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT IT ANYMORE.

WHY DON'T YOU JUST SHUT UP?

FWICK

WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL? HE SAID HE DOESN'T WANNA DO IT.

YANK

REMEM-BER?

I TOLD YOU SUZUKA HATES GUYS WHO DON'T TAKE THEMSELVES SERIOUSLY.

AH...WAIT, AKITSUKI!

THUNK

SHUT UP.

JUST LEAVE HIM ALONE.

MIYAMOTO-SENPAI ENTERED YOU IN THE COMPETITION BECAUSE HE BELIEVES IN YOU!

SO YOU'D BETTER BE THERE TOMORROW.

WOO

WOO

301

YAMATO AKITSUKI

ASAHIYU BATHS

ALL MEN ARE PIGS!

WHACK

HEY, GET YOUR BUTT OVER HERE, AND START DRINKING. WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING?

.....

I MEAN, YOU FOLLOWED HER ALL THE WAY TO HER FAMILY'S HOUSE. OF COURSE SHE'S GONNA FREAK OUT. CREEPY.

WHAT? DID SUZUKA-CHAN SAY SHE HATES YOU AGAIN?

MAYBE YOU SHOULD EASE OFF ON THE WHOLE STALKER THING.

HA, HA, HE'S CRYING.

GO AWAY! JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.

YOU SKIP TRACK PRACTICE, AND JUST SIT HERE WALLOWING IN YOUR OWN SELF-PITY.

WHAT HAPPENED TO NEVER GIVING UP?

I HAVEN'T—

. . . . . !

LIKE THEY DON'T ALREADY KNOW.

CAN'T YOU KEEP IT DOWN?

IF ANYONE FINDS OUT I'VE GOT A COLLEGE GIRL IN HERE, I'LL BE BUSTED.

DING

LOOKS LIKE YOU'VE GOT A VISITOR.

DONG

カリ

チャ

CLICK

YES?

ASAHINA...
A—

ARE YOU...
...QUIT-TING THE TEAM?

WHAT'RE YOU DOING HERE?
.....

BUT I GUESS YOU NEVER REALLY CARED ABOUT THE TEAM.
.....

YOU'VE BEEN WORKING SO HARD LATELY...
I ACTUALLY STARTED TO THINK THAT MAYBE YOU DO HAVE WHAT IT TAKES.

THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU NOT TO JOIN UNLESS YOU WERE SERIOUS–
JUST LEAVE ME ALONE...
.....

SHH!

THEY'RE FIGHT-ING.

WHAT'S GOING ON?

SO I GUESS YOU WIN.

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTED ME TO QUIT.

OH, SO THAT'S HOW IT IS!

SNAP

. . . . . .

YOU JOIN UP ON A WHIM, AND THEN YOU JUST QUIT...

...WITH-OUT EVEN THINK-ING ABOUT THE REST OF THE TEAM.

I GUESS I WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG.

I MEAN...

THAT'S RIGHT...

I JUST REALLY...

YEAH.

...WANT TO SEE HIM.

BESIDES...

YOU LOOK JUST LIKE HIM.

YAMATO AKITSUKI

I'LL NEVER BE LIKE KAZUKI TSUDA ANYWAY!

WHA—

...!

I...

WHO THE HELL DO YOU THINK YOU ARE?

ALL YOU DO IS COMPARE ME TO HIM.

YOU LOOK AT ME, AND ALL YOU SEE IS HIM.

QUIT COMPARING ME TO SOME DEAD GUY!

JUST GET OVER IT!

SLAP

. . . . . !

SLAM
AH!
FWOOSH

.....!

IDIOT.

LET'S GO... THIS IS NO FUN.

DON'T EVEN THINK OF PUKING HERE.

I DON'T FEEL SO GOOD, SAOTOME-SAN.

SLAM

...THE HELL DID SHE SLAP ME?

WHY...

...

ASAHIYU BATHS

SHIT.

AND WHY'D SHE HAVE TO MAKE THAT FACE?

WOO

WOO

WOO

LOOKS LIKE AKITSUKI'S REALLY NOT GONNA SHOW.

DAMN IT...

E-EASY NOW...

HELL IF I KNOW!

WHAT DO YOU THINK, ASAHINA?

CHATTER

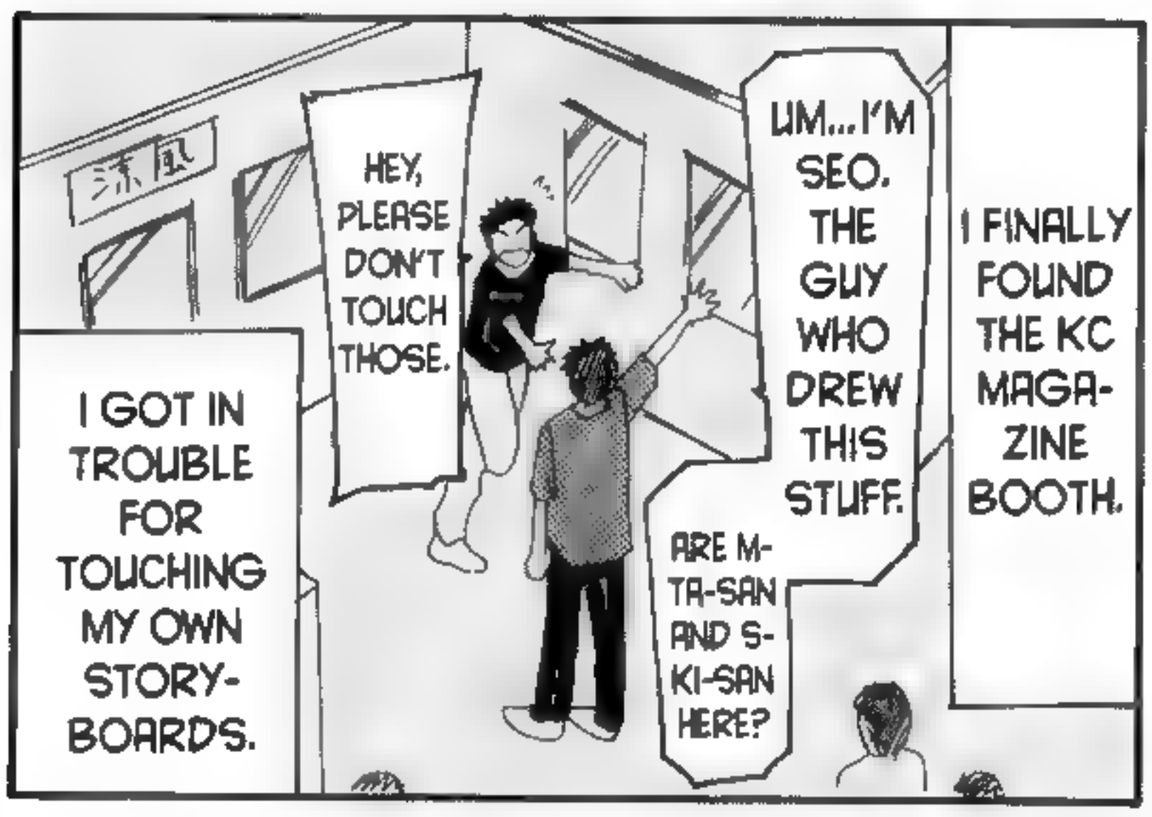
CHATTER

# TOKYO REGIONAL TRACK COMPETITION

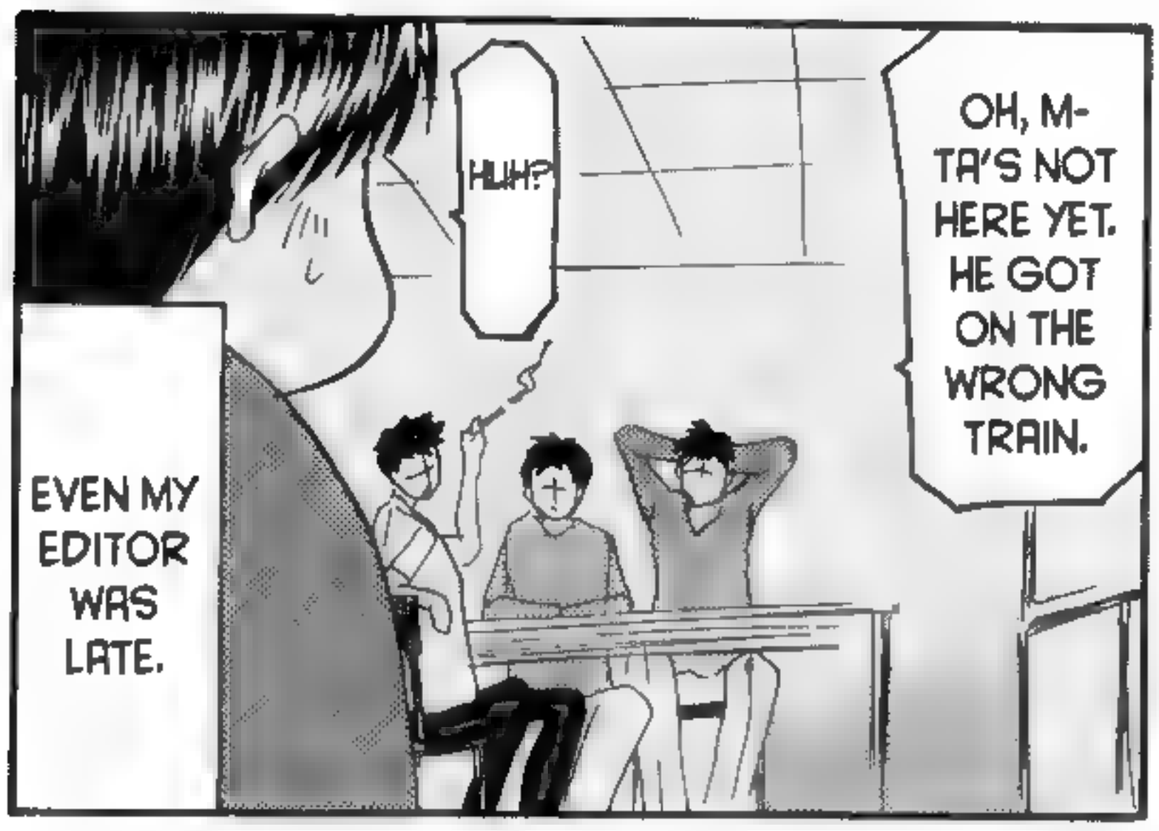
301

# YAMATO AKITSUKI

I FINALLY MADE IT TO THE K FEST.
UH... I'M HERE FOR THE SIGNING.
GUEST ENTRANCE
YOU CAN LINE UP RIGHT OVER THERE.
NO, ACTUALLY I'M...
GO AHEAD.
THE GUY MISTOOK ME FOR A FAN.


I FINALLY FOUND THE KC MAGAZINE BOOTH.
UM... I'M SEO. THE GUY WHO DREW THIS STUFF.
ARE M-TA-SAN AND S-KI-SAN HERE?
HEY, PLEASE DON'T TOUCH THOSE.
I GOT IN TROUBLE FOR TOUCHING MY OWN STORYBOARDS.

## SUZUKA FOUR-PANEL THEATER NUMBER FOURTEEN
## SEO GOES TO A SIGNING - PART 2



酒

HURRY IT UP, YASUNOBU!

WHY'D YOU GET ME UP SO EARLY?

WELL THEN, WHY DON'T YOU JUST GO TO THE TRACK MEET?

ISN'T THAT TODAY?

GRR

WHY THE HELL WOULD I WANNA DO THAT?

WHY SHOULD I GO TO SOME STUPID TRACK MEET AFTER...

SLAP

...EVERY-THING SHE SAID TO ME? SHE SLAPPED ME, YOU KNOW?

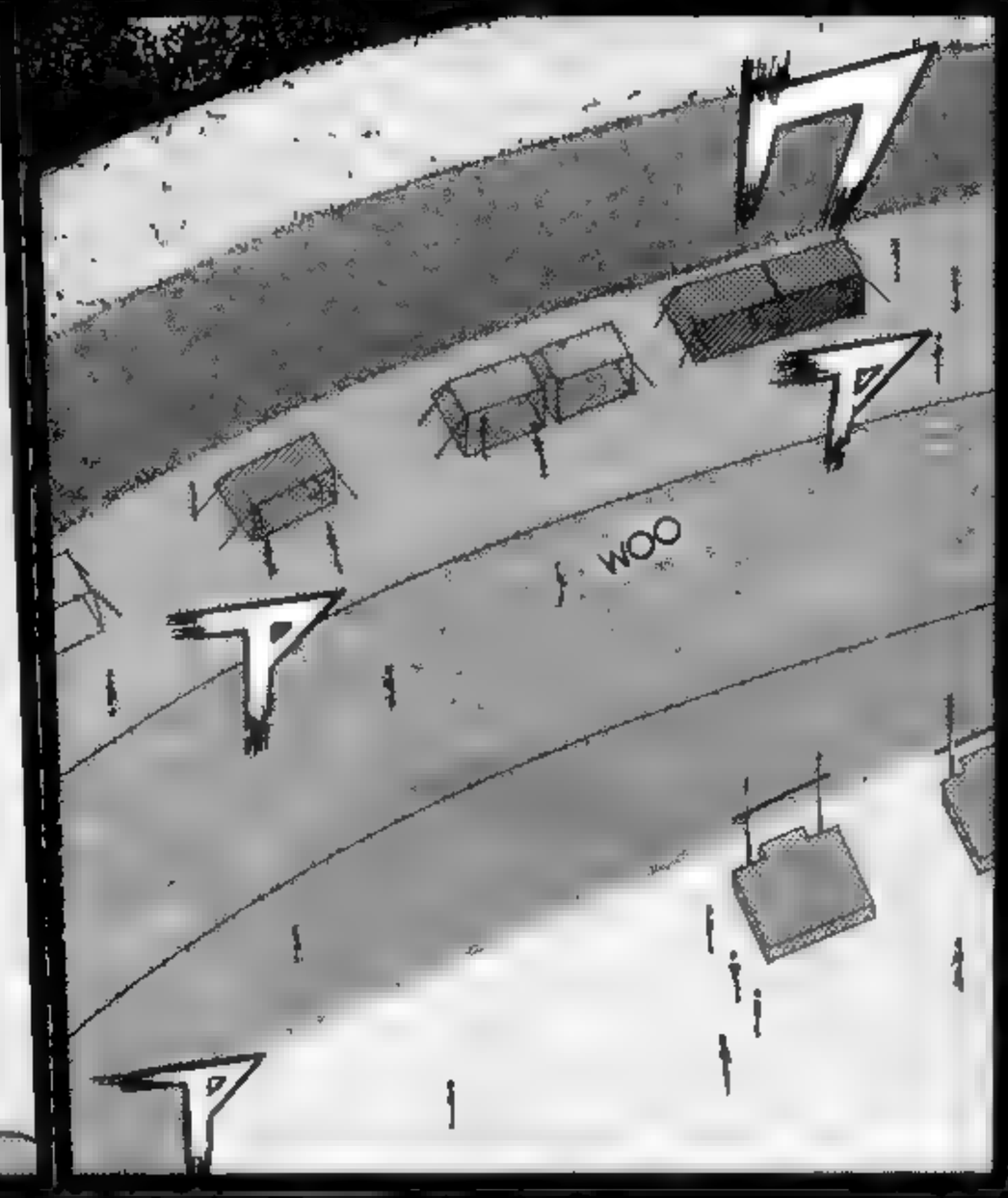
YOU DON'T WANNA SPEND YOUR SUNDAY LYING AROUND YOUR ROOM, DO YOU? IT'S TOO DEPRESSING.

OKAY, THEN. HOW ABOUT KARA-OKE?

NOWHERE'S GONNA BE OPEN THIS EARLY.

# SUZUKA

## #25 PROVOCATION



GOD...I CAN'T BELIEVE I WAS ACTUALLY WORRIED ABOUT HIM.

STOP COM-PARING ME TO SOME DEAD GUY!

JUST GET OVER IT!

HOW DO YOU FEEL? DO YOU THINK YOU'LL BREAK ANY RECORDS TODAY?

OVER HERE!

OH YEAH, I ALMOST FORGOT... THESE ARE *HIS* STOMPING GROUNDS.

WHAT'S WITH ALL THE TV CAMERAS?

WOO

HERE HE COMES!

KYAA.

WOO

THAT'S EMERSON ARIMA. HE'S A SOPHOMORE AT TOUTO PREP.

HE'S THE NUMBER ONE HIGH SCHOOL SPRINTER IN THE NATION.

REALLY...

BACK IN JUNIOR HIGH, HE ALWAYS PLACED SECOND RIGHT BEHIND KAZUKI.

CHATTER

CHATTER

IF KAZUKI WERE ALIVE TODAY...

THIS WOULD BE ONE HELL OF A COMPETI-TION.

HE ROSE TO THE TOP THE MOMENT HE STARTED HIGH SCHOOL.

WHAT DOES YAMATO-KUN HAVE TO DO WITH ANY OF THIS?

YOU MIGHT BE RIGHT.

THAT'S WHY THIS YEAR I WAS HOPING AKITSUKI COULD TAKE KAZUKI'S PLACE AS—

IF HE HADN'T DIED...

I BET ALL THOSE REPORTERS WOULD BE SURROUND-ING TSUDA-SENPAI RIGHT NOW.

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM WITH AKITSUKI?

...

THAT LOSER WON'T EVEN BOTHER TO SHOW UP.

FWICK

AND IF TSUDA-SENPAI WERE ALIVE TODAY, THERE WOULD BE NO COMPE-TITION.

HE WOULD KICK ARIMA'S ASS...

KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN, YOU IDIOT.

I DON'T CARE WHO HEARS ME.

THAT GUY'S NOTHING COMPARED TO TSUDA-SENPAI!

NICE PLAN-NING, GRAMPS.

. . . . . .

GEEZ...

WHERE TO?

WELL, IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY-WHERE TO GO, THEN JUST FOL-LOW ME.

THERE AREN'T EVEN ANY RESTAU-RANTS OPEN.

.....

YOU'LL FIND THAT OUT WHEN WE GET THERE!

TOKYO REGIONAL TRACK COMPETITION

OF COURSE I WOULDN'T HAVE COME! DID HASHIBA PUT YOU UP TO THIS?

YEAH, WELL...YOU WOULDN'T HAVE COME IF I'D TOLD YOU THE TRUTH.

WHAT THE HELL? THIS IS WHERE THE TRACK COMPETI-TION IS!

I CAME HERE CAUSE THERE'RE GONNA BE TONS OF HOT CHICKS.

I DON'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT YOUR PROB-LEMS.

YOU IDIOT.

ONCE THE GIRLS SEE HOW FAST YOU ARE, MAYBE YOU'LL GET SOME NUMBERS.

SO YOU MIGHT AS WELL RUN YOUR RACE.

I DON'T HAVE ANY REASON TO RUN ANYMORE.

HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVE TO SAY THIS?

OH REALLY?

HANG ON.

I'M GOING HOME.

AND...

...SOME PLAYBOY IS ABOUT TO HIT ON HER.

LOOK!

THERE'S SUZUKA-CHAN.

HUH?

THEN YOU CAN JUST HANG OUT INSIDE.

YOU MIGHT MEET SOME CUTIES.

H-HEY.

HUH?

'SUP.

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

LONG TIME NO SEE.

WHOA! I SEE YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED.

YOU GUYS SEEMED PRETTY CLOSE.

DID YOU HAVE A THING FOR HIM OR SOMETHING?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW YOU—

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WAS ALWAYS HANGING OUT WITH TSUDA AT ALL THE REGIONAL COMPETI-TIONS.

STING

I COULD CARE LESS.

OUCH. THAT'S PROBABLY THE LAST THING YOU WANNA HEAR, EH?

HUH?

OH, I'VE GOT SOME-THING TO SAY.

IF YOU'VE GOT NOTHING TO SAY, THEN JUST LEAVE ME ALONE.

A FEW MINUTES AGO...

YOU SAID I WAS NOTHING COMPARED TO TSUDA, DIDN'T YOU?

WELL, THAT KIND OF PISSES ME OFF.

WHY DON'T YOU JUST FORGET YOU EVER HEARD IT.

OH, I AM SO SORRY.

GOD, YOU'RE PATHETIC... YOU'RE ONLY PISSED OFF CAUSE YOU KNOW IT'S TRUE.

HUH?

IS THAT SUPPOSED TO BE AN APOLOGY?

WHAT DID YOU SAY?

EVEN IF TSUDA WEREN'T DEAD...

I'D STILL BE NUMBER ONE.

KYAAA.

IF TSUDA-SENPAI WERE ALIVE TODAY...

ARE THEY FIGHT-ING?

IT'S ARIMA AND SOME CHICK.

LISTEN TO YOUR-SELF...

IF TSUDA WERE ALIVE...IF TSUDA WERE ALIVE...

LISTEN UP! THERE ARE NO IFS, ANDS, OR BUTS ABOUT IT. TSUDA IS...

...DEAD!

HUH? WHAT THE HELL IS HER PROBLEM?

DID YOU HEAR THAT? SHE THINKS TSUDA WAS FASTER THAN ARIMA.

CHATTER

CHATTER

DON'T TRY TO TELL ME THAT SOME DEAD GUY IS FASTER THAN ME!

ARE YOU FUCK-ING CRAZY?

YEAH! APOLO-GIZE TO ARIMA RIGHT NOW.

YOU'D BETTER WATCH YOUR MOUTH, YOU LITTLE BITCH!

MAYBE I'LL FORGIVE YOU.

WHY DON'T YOU GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES, AND SAY YOU'RE SORRY?

THERE'S NO REASON FOR ME TO GET MIXED UP IN THIS...

LET'S GO...IF WE GET INVOLVED, WE'D ONLY BE STOOP-ING DOWN TO THEIR LEVEL.

NO REASON AT ALL...

YEAH.

RUSTLE

HUH?

GET BACK HERE, YOU IDIOT–

?

BONK

STEP

YA—

YAMATO-KUN!

HUH?

WHY THE HELL SHOULD ASAHINA APOLO-GIZE TO YOU?

WHO'S THIS? YOUR BOYFRIEND? FINE, YOU CAN GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES, AND APOLOGIZE FOR HER.

ALL RIGHT, SPIKE HEAD?

SO YOU THINK TSUDA WAS FASTER THAN ME?

WHAT?

HUH?

I COULD GIVE TWO SHITS ABOUT YOU AND TSUDA!

?

HUH?

NOBODY'S FASTER...

...THAN I AM!

BUT I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT TO SAY!
THEY JUST KIND OF THREW ME OUT THERE ON STAGE.
JUST START TALK-ING.
GO ON.
THE SIGNING FINALLY STARTED.

## SUZUKA FOUR-PANEL THEATER NUMBER FIFTEEN
## SEO GOES TO A SIGNING - PART 3

AFTER THE EVENT
NOW YOU TELL ME.
YOU COULD'VE AT LEAST TALKED TO THE FANS A LITTLE, SEO-SAN.
I GOT THROUGH A ONE HOUR SIGN-ING...
...IN JUST FIFTEEN MINUTES.

※ *SORRY IF I DIDN'T SEEM VERY INTO IT. I WAS JUST NERVOUS.

WHAT?

I COULD GIVE TWO SHITS ABOUT YOU AND TSUDA.

# SUZUKA

## #26 THE TARGET

NOBODY'S FASTER...

...THAN I AM!

HUH?

WHAT AN IDIOT.

THAT GUY THINKS HE'S FASTER THAN ARIMA?

DUDE... DO YOU EVEN KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

I MEAN, WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?

YA-YAMATO-KUN!

I KNOW EXACTLY WHAT I'M SAYING.

THERE'S NO WAY I'LL LOSE TO YOU!

STEP
HEY, WAIT UP!
THIS IS STUPID.
YOU'RE NOT EVEN WORTH MY TIME.
. . . . . .
I TAKE IT YOU'RE GONNA BE RUN-NING IN THE 100-METER DASH!
DON'T EVEN THINK ABOUT TRYING TO PUSS OUT!
YEAH, WE'LL BE WATCHING YOU.
I GUESS WE'LL FIND OUT WHO'S FASTER SOON ENOUGH.

THAT GUY PISSES ME OFF.

STUCK UP ASS-HOLE.

WHAT THE HELL WERE YOU THINK-ING?

WHY'D YOU SAY THAT?

.....

PISSES YOU OFF?

IF THAT HAPPENS, I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO...

...APOLO-GIZE.

WH-WHAT IF YOU LOSE?

DID YOU EVEN THINK ABOUT THAT?

WHAT?

DON'T WORRY. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS WIN, RIGHT?

WHY DO YOU ALWAYS HAVE TO BE SO RECK-LESS?

CAN'T YOU THINK BEFORE YOU OPEN UP YOUR BIG MOUTH?

WHAT'S WITH YOU?

I THOUGHT YOU SAID YOU WERE QUITTING THE TEAM.

STEP

I'M SURE I'LL MAN-AGE SOME-HOW.

FIRST, I'D BET-TER FIND SOMEONE WHO WILL LET ME BORROW SOME SHORTS AND SPIKES.

HEY, WAIT...

CHATTER

7

SMACK

?

CALM DOWN, CAPTAIN. HE SAID HE WAS SORRY.

GRR

YOU'RE DEAD, AKITSUKI!

...YOU DON'T EVEN HAVE YOUR SPIKES OR YOUR UNI-FORM?

FIRST YOU SKIP PRAC-TICE FOR THREE DAYS, THEN YOU SHOW UP TO THE COMPE-TITION LATE, AND...

29

OUCH.

ARE YOU OKAY, AKIT-SUKI-KUN?

PUT DOWN THE SHOT PUT BALL!

LET GO OF ME, MIYA-MOTO!

Y-YEAH.

OKAY!

I'LL GO CHANGE. HELP AKITSUKI WARM UP, SAKURAI.

YOU CAN HAVE MINE... I'M RUNNING THE 400 METER AT 11:00.

THANKS, MIYAMOTO-SENPAI.

HEY, SOMEBODY LEND AKITSUKI SOME SHORTS AND SPIKES.

NO... THAT'S OKAY! THIS IS PART OF MY JOB.

SORRY, HONOKA-CHAN. I KNOW YOU'RE REALLY BUSY.

I HAD SOME STUFF TO DEAL WITH.

HEH, SORRY.

I'M SO GLAD YOU CAME.

OH...

I WAS WORRIED OU'D HATE ME IF I GOT TOO CLINGY, SO I DIDN'T WANNA STOP BY YOUR HOUSE.

YOU DIDN'T SHOW UP FOR THREE DAYS. I WAS STARTING TO WORRY.

I JUST FINISHED. WANT ME TO HELP YOU WARM UP?

I'LL HANDLE IT.

WHY DON'T YOU GO PUT ON SOME CLOTHES?

SQUEEZE

HONOKA-CHA—

OUCH!

I HEARD ALL ABOUT WHAT HAPPENED!

HUH?

GRR

HASHIBA

SO YOU DECIDED TO SHOW UP AFTER ALL, AKITSUKI.

WHAT?

WHY'D YOU DO THAT?

ALL THE SPRINTERS ARE TALKING ABOUT IT.

YOU PICKED A FIGHT WITH EMERSON ARIMA, RIGHT?

NO WAY.

AKITSUKI-KUN ISN'T THE TYPE OF GUY WHO JUST GOES AROUND STARTING FIGHTS.

WELL...

WAS HE...

...TRYING TO DEFEND ASAHINA-SAN?

THAT DICKHEAD JUST PISSES ME OFF.

WHAT?

STARE

.....

I CAN TAKE HIM.

STUCK UP ASSHOLES LIKE HIM ARE USUALLY ALL TALK ANYWAY.

...RAN THE 100 METER DASH IN 10.46 SECONDS.

EMERSON ARIMA...

WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

DID YOU EVEN KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT HIM BE-FORE YOU WENT AND PICKED THAT FIGHT?

.....

HE'S THE NUMBER ONE HIGH SCHOOL SPRINTER IN THE NATION.

DO...

DO YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT HIM, AKITSUKI-KUN?

THAT'S RIGHT. WHY DO YOU THINK ALL THOSE TV REPORT-ERS ARE HERE?

NUMBER ONE? YOU MEAN, THE NUM-BER ONE SPRINTER IS RUN-NING HERE TODAY?

YOU HAD NO IDEA, DID YOU?

AKITSUKI-KUN!

GULP

...

IS HE REALLY THAT FAST?

UH... WELL...

YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD, AKITSUKI-KUN.

HE'S FREAK-ING OUT.

STEP

AH!

GOTTA USE THE JOHN!

I'LL NEVER WIN!

MAYBE I'LL JUST SAY I'VE GOT A STOMACHACHE AND GO HIDE SOMEWHERE. IF I DON'T GO OUT THERE, THEY'LL HAVE TO DISQUALIFY ME.

YOU OKAY?

I KNOW THE CAPTAIN LOOKED PISSED, BUT HE'LL BE ROOTING FOR YOU.

GOOD LUCK, AKIT-SUKI.

SORRY I TOOK SO LONG.

AH...

ACTU-ALLY, MY STOMACH KIND OF HURTS...

HEH...

YOU MISSED THE RACE BECAUSE YOUR STOMACH HURT?

ROAR

HUH?

I'M GLAD YOU MADE IT.

IF YOU'D GOTTEN DISQUALI-FIED, THE CAPTAIN WOULD'VE KILLED YOU.

WHAT'S WRONG? YOU DON'T LOOK SO GOOD.

DRIP

DRIP

I'LL DO MY BEST...

GOOD LUCK!

AKIT-SUKI-KUN.

IS HE OKAY?

WOBBLE

WOBBLE

YOU WORRIED ABOUT YAMATO?

RUSTLE

HUH?

WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE...

...HAT-TORI-KUN?

YOU'D BETTER PUT SOME CLOTHES ON, OR YOU'LL CATCH COLD.

HUH?

THERE'S NO WAY HE'LL EVER WIN.

WOO

WOO

WELL... I HEARD YAMATO WAS GONNA RACE, SO I FIGURED I'D BETTER COME WATCH.

HE'S RACING AGAINST THE NUMBER ONE HIGH SCHOOL SPRINTER IN THE NATION.

WHAT THE HELL WAS HE THINKING?

HH HYUU

AND NOW LOOK WHAT HE'S GOT-TEN HIMSELF INTO. THE NUMBER ONE SPRINTER IN JAPAN HAS...

YEAH...

THAT IDIOT. HIS MOTTO IS ALWAYS "ACT NOW, THINK LATER."

...SET HIS SIGHTS ON YAMATO.

.....

LET'S GO.

IT'S ABOUT TO START.

BUT...

THIS IS THE LAST CALL FOR THE 100-METER DASH.

ALL PARTICIPATING ATHLETES PLEASE GATHER ON THE TRACK IMMEDIATELY!

I'M SURE GRAMPS WILL FIND A WAY TO MAKE THIS INTERESTING.

COME ON!

HE HAS NO IDEA WHAT HE'S UP AGAINST.

.....

I DON'T THINK SO...

GUESS I CAN'T USE THAT AS AN EX-CUSE.

THESE SPIKES AND SHORTS FIT PER-FECTLY.

HERE I AM...

SQUIRM

AHH...

AH... HERE!

NUMBER 36! YAMATO AKITSUKI-KUN!

LET'S GET THIS OVER WITH.

GET READY TO...

STEP

...GET DOWN ON YOUR KNEES AND BEG FOR FOR-GIVENESS.

TOTO PREP

YOU WEREN'T HERE FOR THE FIRST CALL, WERE YOU?

YOU'VE GOTTA BE HERE, SO WE CAN GIVE YOU YOUR NUMBER.

OH... SORRY...

36

FINE, JUST PUT IT ON. YOU'RE IN THE FIRST GROUP.

HEY, THERE'S THAT SPIKE HEAD!

WOO

BREAK YOUR RECORD, ARIMA!

WOO

GO, ARIMA-KUN!

WHAT'S WITH THE HUGE AUDIENCE?

?

HEY, GRAMPS! DON'T BREAK A HIP!

MAYBE I SHOULD JUST APOLOGIZE RIGHT NOW.

I BROUGHT SUZUKA-CHAN ALONG, SO YOU'D BETTER BE FAST!

HEY, LIM...

HUH?

WHAT?

YOU READY TO APOLO-GIZE?

A-ASAHINA...

STEP

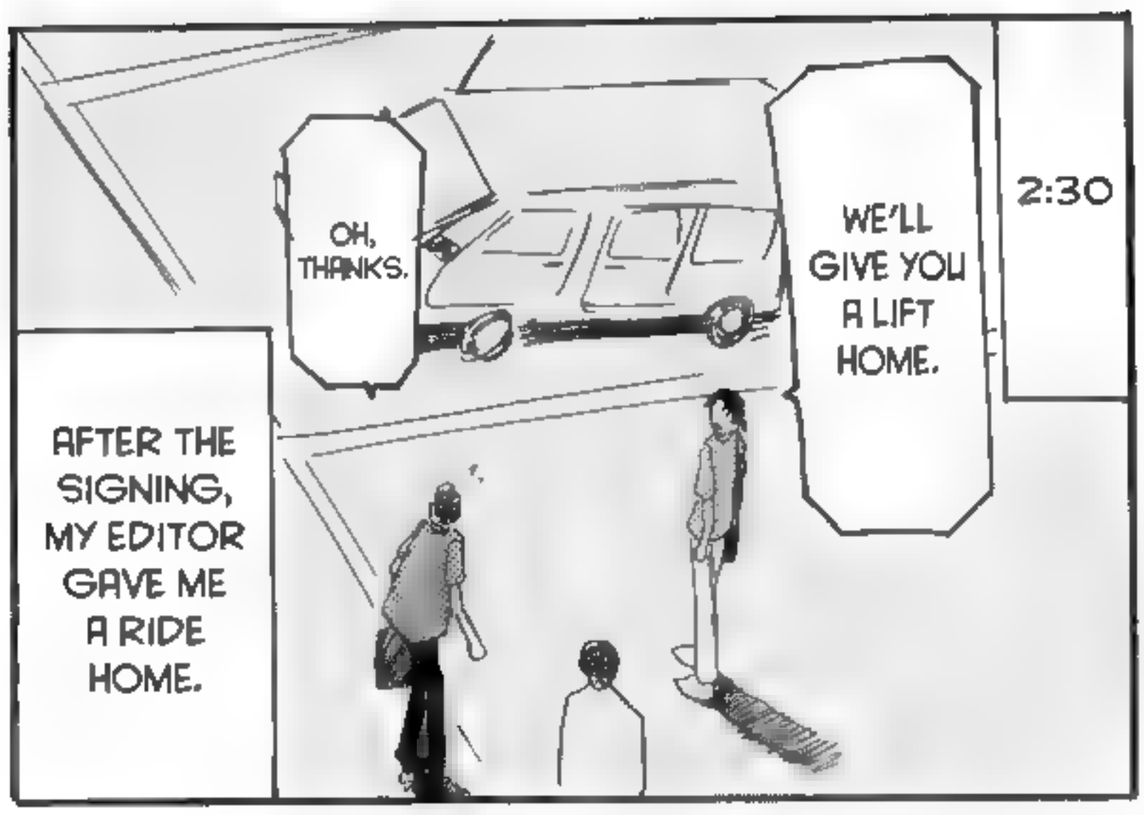
I CAN'T LET HER SEE ME LOOKING LIKE A LOSER!

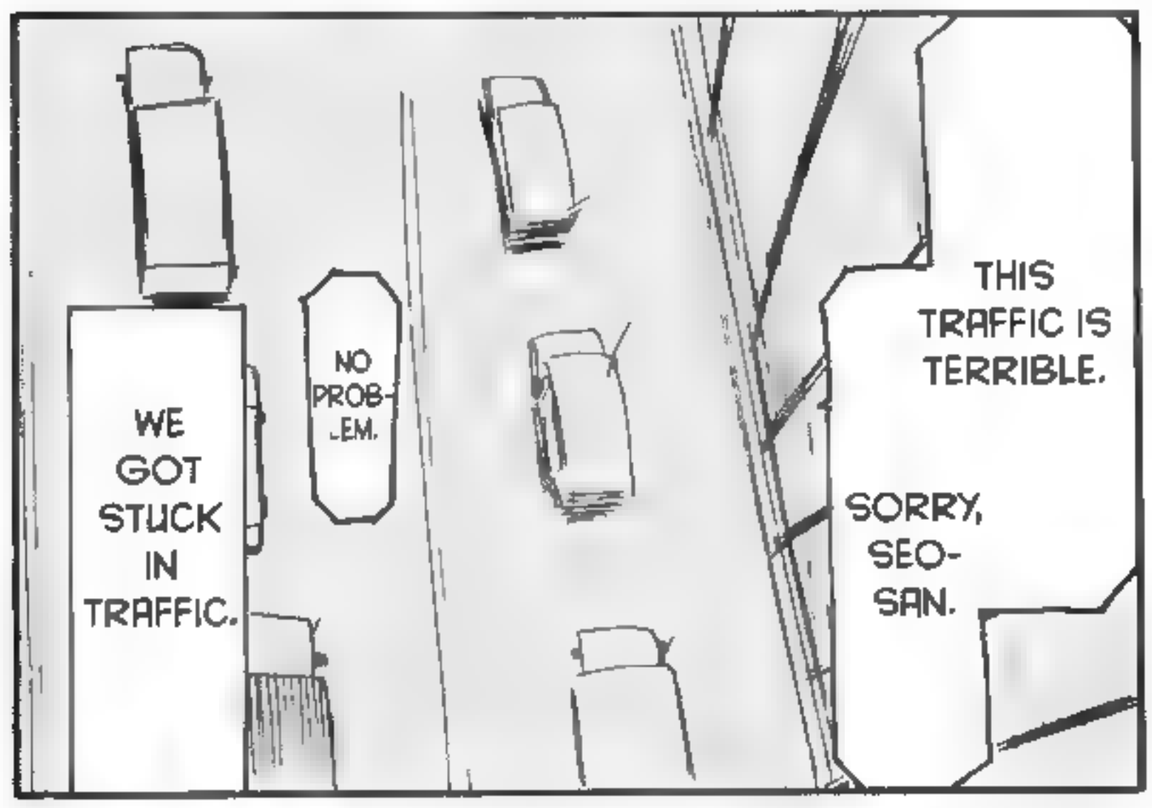
FORGET IT!

WOO

WILL THE FIRST GROUP PLEASE TAKE THEIR PLACES ON THE FIELD.

GRIP




## SUZUKA FOUR-PANEL THEATER NUMBER SIXTEEN

# SEO GOES TO A SIGNING - PART 4

IN TWO HOURS? NO WAY!
DON'T BE LATE.
MAKE SURE YOU GET THE STORY-BOARDS TO ME BY 10:00.
BY THE TIME I FINALLY MADE IT HOME, IT WAS AFTER 8:00.

*IT TOOK ME TILL 11:00.

CLICK

CLICK

LET'S GET STARTED!

SWIP

7

36

# SUZUKA

## #27 THE SHOWDOWN

CHATTER

NAH, HE'S NOT GONNA WASTE HIS ENERGY ON A REGIONAL RUN LIKE THIS ONE.

YEAH, I JUST WANNA SEE IF HE BREAKS HIS RE-CORD.

CHATTER

I GUESS THERE'S NOT MUCH COMPETI-TION FOR HIM OUT THERE.

LOOKS LIKE ARIMA'S TREATING THIS JUST LIKE ANY OTHER RACE.

WELL...I GUESS THAT MAKES SENSE.

NOBODY'S EVEN PAYING ATTENTION TO YAMATO.

GOOD LUCK!

AKITSUKI! WE'RE ROOTING FOR YOU!

.....

NO...I JUST YELLED AT HIM, SO...

SNEAK

HEY, CAP-TAIN...WHY DON'T YOU COME OUT HERE AND WATCH?

.....

SECOND?

AKITSUKI! ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS PLACE SECOND IN ORDER TO MOVE ON!

DON'T GIVE UP!

ON YOUR MARKS...

CLICK カチャ

CLICK カチャ

IT'S MY FIRST...

...THE NUMBER ONE HIGH SCHOOL SPRINTER IN THE NATION.

EMERSON ARIMA IS...

I'M UP AGAINST THE NUMBER ONE SPRINTER IN THE NATION.

...COM-PETITION EVER, AND...

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER, YAMATO!

I GUESS THERE'S NOBODY OUT THERE WHO THINKS I EVEN HAVE A CHANCE.

ASAHINA...

SUZUKA-CHAN'S WORRIED ABOUT YOU!

DON'T LOOK AT ME LIKE THAT...

I DON'T CARE HOW MUCH YOU TRY TO IMITATE TSUDA. YOU STILL WON'T BEAT ME.

GOING FOR A TWO-FOOTED ROCKET LAUNCH, EH?

THUMP THUMP

I MAY NOT HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO BEAT HIM...

BUT...

GET SET!

NISHI

CREAK

I WON'T LET HIM GET AWAY WITH WHAT HE DID!

THUMP THUMP

I'M NOT KAZUKI TSUDA.

BANG

THAT ASSHOLE MADE ASAHINA CRY!

7

36

NO ONE CAN BEAT HIM!

WOO

GO, ARIMA!

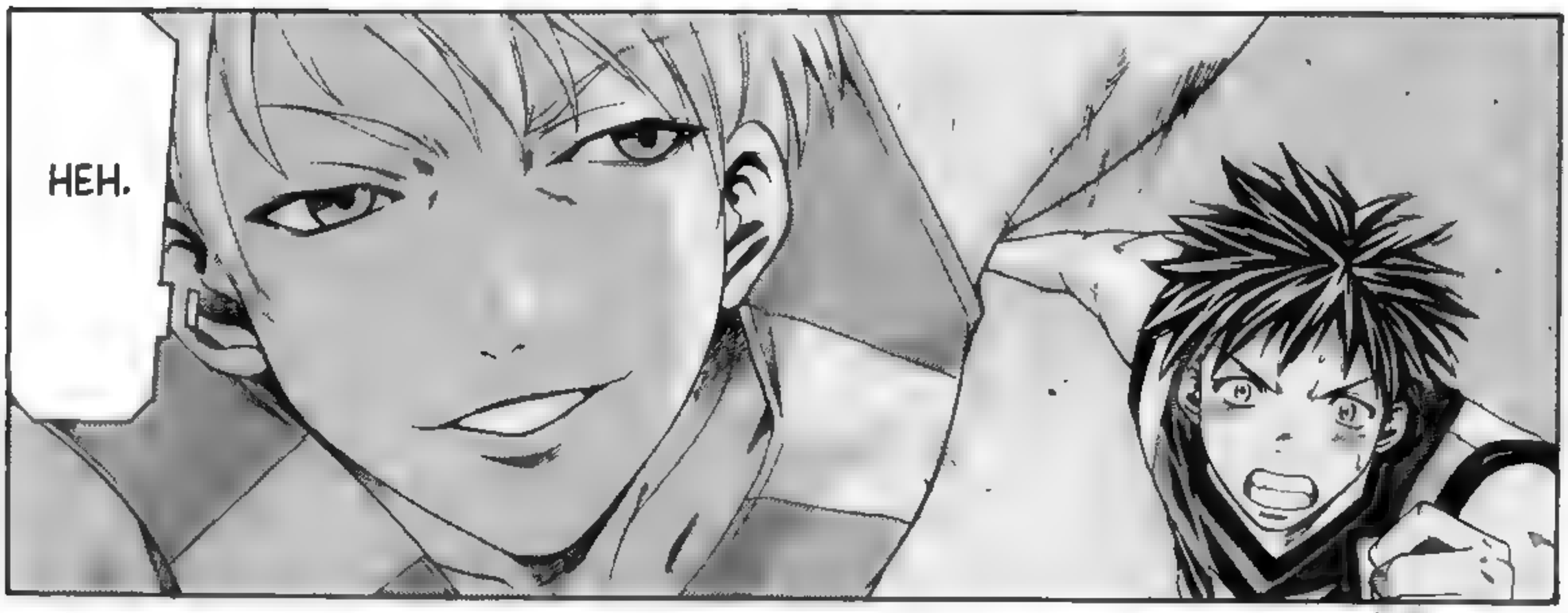
HE'S ALREADY WAY BEHIND...

HE'S NUMBER ONE IN THE NATION?

FWOOSH

OUCH. THIS DOESN'T LOOK GOOD.

YAMATO USUALLY STARTS OUT IN THE LEAD...


HEH.

...AND STILL WIN WITHOUT A FIGHT.
I CAN PROBA-BLY JUST RELAX NOW...

...
GRIP
HI
36

SHIT! I CAN'T CATCH UP!

HE'S RIGHT THERE IN FRONT OF ME, BUT...

I GUESS AKITSUKI'S JUST NOT READY TO FACE HIM YET.

I CAN'T LOSE TO THIS ASS-HOLE!

OH, MAN...

I THOUGHT HE'D PULL IT OFF SOME-HOW.

CHECK IT OUT! HE'S LEAVING THAT SPIKE-HEADED FREAK IN THE DUST.

YEAH, AFTER HE SAID, "NO ONE'S FASTER THAN ME."

SKRINCH

.....

LOOK! HE'S STILL TRYING.

DOES HE REALLY THINK HE HAS A CHANCE?

SHIVER

ゾクッ

WHAT'RE YOU DOING, YOU IDIOT?

FWOOSH

WHA-?

I'M TRYING!

WHOOSH

7

36

HE'S GONNA PULL IT OFF!

OH MY GOD! THEY'RE NECK AND NECK.

ドキン。

THUMP

ドキン。

THUMP

HOLDING BACK MY ASS!

STOP HOLDING BACK!

WOO

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU DOING, ARIMA?

THIS GUY IS FUCKING FAST!

## CHARACTER PROFILE NO. 9

7

36

FWOOSH

WOO

FASTER, ARIMA!

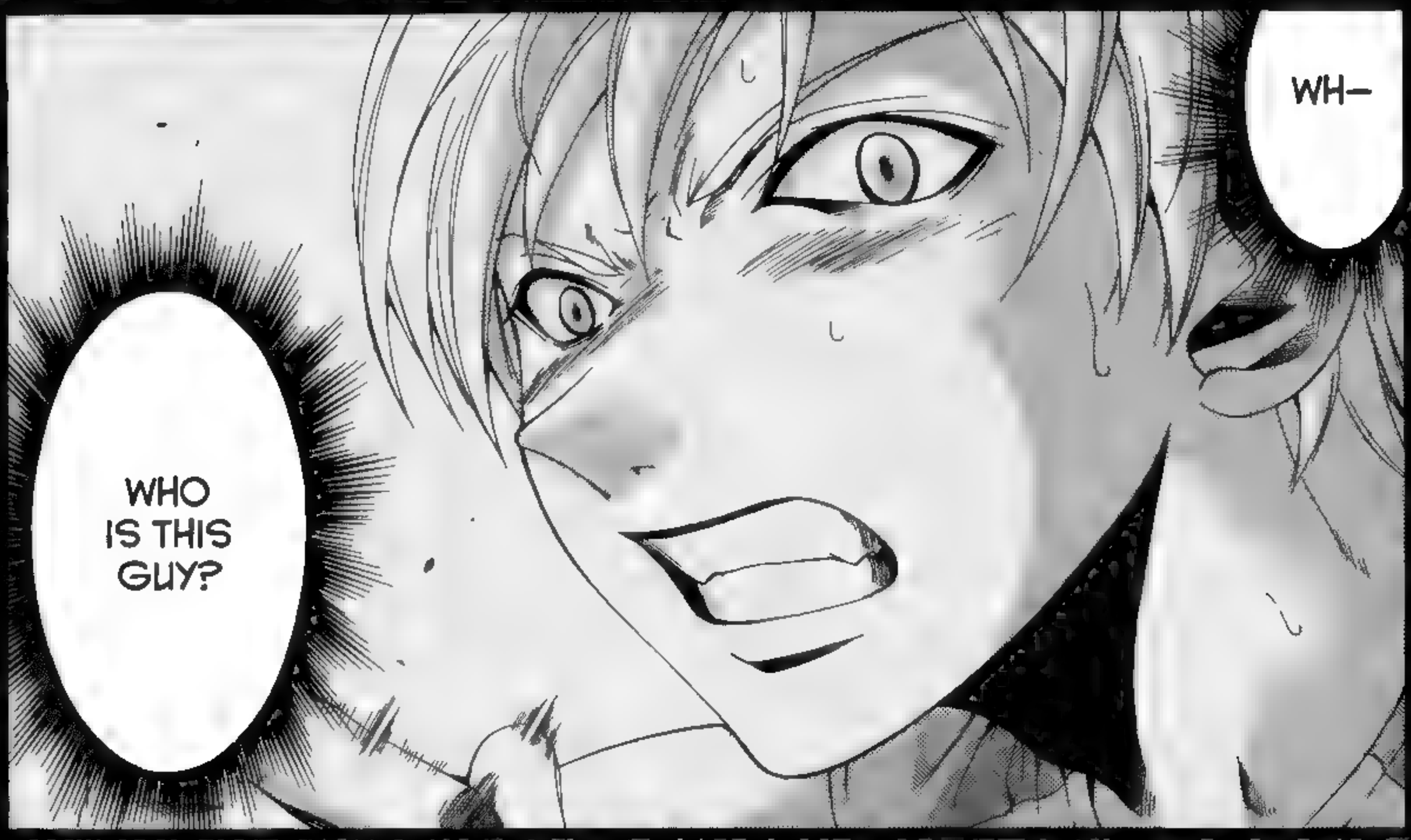
WH-WHAT THE HELL IS GOING ON? THEY'RE NECK AND NECK.

WHEN HE HEARD ASAHINA-SAN'S VOICE...

...AKIT-SUKI-KUN CAUGHT UP WITH ARIMA.

THUMP ドキン。

THUMP ドキン!!




# SUZUKA

## #28 RESULTS

PASS HIM! PASS HIM!

GO, AKITSUKI!

FWOOSH

ARIMA'S TAKING THE LEAD!

I WON'T LOSE TO THIS ASS-HOLE!

URMPH!

THUNK

I CAN'T...

WHAT'S GOING ON?

WHAT THE HELL?

I CAN'T RUN...

WHOOSH.

DON'T SCREW WITH US LIKE THAT, ARIMA!

WOO

ALL RIGHT! FIRST PLACE!

HAHH

HAHH

GRIP

HAHH

HE OVER-DID IT TRYING TO KEEP UP WITH EMERSON.

A-AKIT-SUKI!

HE TALKS ALL BIG, AND THEN HE FALLS DOWN WITH-OUT EVEN CROSSING THE FINISH LINE.

HOW LAME. WHAT'S THAT GUY'S DEAL?

HE WASN'T EVEN A TRAINED RUN-NER TO BEGIN WITH...

STEP

.....

SKIP THREE DAYS OF PRACTICE, AND WHAT DO YOU EXPECT TO HAP-PEN?

ALL RIGHT!

DON'T WORRY. I'LL GET ON MY KNEES...

YA-MA-TO-KUN!

IT'S COOL.

HUH?

7

38

WHY DON'T YOU JUST BEAT IT? I CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF YOU.

WHAT?

GRR

HUH?

YOU CALL YOURSELF NUMBER ONE?

DIDN'T YOU HEAR ME?

I SAID BEAT IT!

WHOOSH

AH, HE'S RUN-NING AWAY!

WHAT'S WITH THAT ATTI-TUDE?

YOU HAVEN'T WON YET.

JUST RE-MEMBER THAT, ASS-HOLE!

HA, HA, HA. OH, MAN... HE IS SO AWESOME!

MY STOMACH HURTS!

HE MAKES OUR WHOLE TEAM LOOK BAD.

WHAT THE HELL IS AKITSUKI TALKING ABOUT?

HE FELL AGAIN!

CRASH

SHIT...

I CAN'T BE-LIEVE I HAD TO RUN THAT FAST FOR SOME STUPID PRELIMINARY.

MY LEGS HURT...

I'M SUCH A LOSER...

HYUU

HYUU

"JUST REMEMBER THAT, ASSHOLE." GOD, I CAN'T BELIEVE I SAID THAT.

HOW COULD I BE SO STUPID?

STEP

ASAHINA'S PROBABLY TOTALLY PISSED.

AH...

ASAHINA...

HUH? MY LEG?

LET ME SEE THAT LEG.

UM...

I...

CLICK

PSHH

...

36

WHY IS SHE SUDDENLY TRYING TO TAKE CARE OF ME?

I

WHAT THE HELL?

OUCH!

HOLD STILL.

ドキッ

THUMP
THUMP

I MEAN, SHE CHEERED ME ON WHILE I WAS RUNNING...

MAYBE... SHE'S NOT MAD AFTER ALL.

HEY, ASAHINA. WHY'RE YOU DOING THIS?

QUIT SQUIRM-ING.

SORRY.

B-BUT...

I ACTED LIKE SUCH A LOSER IN FRONT OF ALL THOSE PEOPLE.

シャワ

Buzz

シャワ

Buzz

ミ/ナ
ワ BUZZ

ミ/ナ
ワ BUZZ

ミ/ナ
ワ BUZZ

ミ/ナ
ワ BUZZ

LISTEN TO THOSE CICADAS.

IT'S ONLY JUNE, BUT THEY'RE ALREADY BUZZ-ING LIKE CRAZY.

ミ/ナ
ワ BUZZ

ミ/ナ
ワ BUZZ

I'M SO PA-THETIC.

I WAS TALKING LIKE I WAS REALLY HOT STUFF, AND LOOK WHAT HAP-PENED?

YOU'RE PISSED AT ME, AREN'T YOU?

.....

HUH?

IT'S BEEN REALLY HOT THIS YEAR, SO THEY PROBABLY THINK IT'S ALREADY SUMMER.

RIP

OH, RIGHT... THE CICADAS.

YEAH.

BUZZ

BUZZ

THE CICADAS.

.....

36

THERE. THAT OUGHTA DO IT.

CLICK

THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR SKIPPING PRACTICE THREE DAYS IN A ROW.

HUH?

STEP

A- ASA- HINA..

36

THAT'S WHY YOU LOST!

YEAH...

EVEN PEOPLE WHO PRACTICE EVERY DAY LOSE THEIR BALANCE BE- FORE GETTING TO THE FINISH LINE SOME- TIMES.

OH...

YEAH, I GUESS SO.

.....

YOU'D BETTER COME TO PRACTICE EVERY DAY...

...FROM NOW ON.

FWIP

WHAT?

WH-WHAT DOES SHE MEAN BY THAT? I'D BETTER COME?

.....

I WAS GONNA GO ANYWAY.

WELL...

BUZZ

BUZZ

BUZZ

BUZZ

BUZZ

.....

IT'S SO HOT...

I GUESS SUM-MER IS ALMOST HERE.

ALL RIGHT!

KENJI KOBAYAKAWA-KUN TOOK FIRST PLACE IN THE 200-METER SPR NT

## CHARACTER PROFILE NO. 10

### AYANO FUJIKAWA
(AGE 32)

**DATE OF BIRTH**—FEBRUARY 11
(AQUARIUS)
**HEIGHT**—5'3"
**WEIGHT**—100 LBS
**MEASUREMENTS**—35, 23, 36

**LIKES**
- MIHO, YAMATO-KUN
- HOUSEWORK
- HER DECEASED HUSBAND

**DISLIKES**
- BEING UNPRODUCTIVE
- PLACES WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE HANG OUT
- BEING CALLED "LADY"

**GOAL**—TO FIND A HUSBAND FOR MIHO

# SUZUKA

## #29 AN UPSWING

CLINK カチャ

CLINK カチャ

CLINK カチャ

GLANCE ちら

HUH? I WAS JUST LOOK-ING FOR THE SOY SAUCE.

WHAT'S WRONG, YAMATO-KUN? YOU LOOK SO SPACED OUT.

WELL, I GUESS YOU ALWAYS LOOK SPACEY.

I DON'T THINK SHE'S MAD AT ME ANYMORE, BUT...

I JUST DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO HER...

THUNK

HERE'S...

...THE SOY SAUCE.

SPLASH

...MAYBE EVERY-THING WILL GO BACK TO NORMAL.

SO IF I JUST START UP A CONVER-SATION...

OH, THANKS.

WHOA!

THAT'S WAY TOO MUCH SOY SAUCE, YAMATO-KUN.

I GUESS SHE'S NOT MAD ANY-MORE!

SORRY!

YOU'RE GONNA KEEL OVER FROM HIGH BLOOD PRESSURE.

AH...

CLICK カチッ

H-
HEY...

GOOD
MORN-
ING.

AH.

CLOP カツーン

CLOP カツーン

GOOD
MORN-
ING.

SHE
DOESN'T
HATE ME.

I'VE JUST
GOTTA ACT
CASUAL.

STEP

STEP

SURE IS HOT TODAY.

IT FEELS JUST LIKE SUMMER.

HUH? YEAH, I'LL BE THERE.

OH YEAH?

HEY.

YOU'RE COMING TO PRACTICE TODAY, RIGHT?

WAIT...

WE'D BETTER HURRY, OR WE'LL BE LATE.

.....

UH...

UM...

I GUESS SHE IS STILL MAD...

.....

1-C

I DON'T GET HER AT ALL...

SIGH...

BUT...

WHAT'RE YOU DOING, YOU IDIOT?

I KNOW THAT AKITSUKI-KUN LIKES ASAHINA-SAN, BUT...

WHY DID ASAHINA-SAN YELL LIKE THAT AT THE RACE?

WAS IT JUST BECAUSE SHE DIDN'T WANT OUR SCHOOL TO LOSE?

OR...

OKAY, THAT'S IT FOR TODAY!

THANKS!

DOES SHE FEEL THE SAME WAY I DO ABOUT AKITSUKI-KUN?

THANKS.

GOOD WORK, AKITSUKI-KUN!

HERE'S A TOWEL.

PHEW... FINALLY!

HUH? J-JUST DOING MY JOB.

YOU'RE SO NICE, HONOKA-CHAN.

HUH? YOU NEED A TOWEL, KOBAYAKAWA?

HEY...IS SHE JUST GONNA IGNORE ME?

TRACK SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT
KENJI KOBAYAKAWA-KUN
TOOK FIRST PLACE IN THE
200-METER SPRINT

DO YOU WANT SOMETHING TO DRINK, AKITSUKI-KUN?

HEY, MANAGER. WHERE'S MY TOWEL?

AH.

UM, AKITSUKI-KUN?

FWIP

WELL, TIME TO GO HOME.

UM, IF YOU DON'T MIND...

YEAH?

I'D LIKE YOU TO WALK ME HOME...

FWUMP

I CAN'T RUN ANY-MORE!

PUNISH-MENT FOR WHAT?

YOU'RE NOT GOING ANY-WHERE. THIS WEEK, YOU'RE DOING TWENTY SPRINTS AFTER EVERY PRACTICE. THAT'S YOUR PUNISHMENT

HUH?

DO I HAVE TO SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU?

HUH?

CRACK

メキッ

CRACK

メキッ

SHUDDER

ハラ ハラ

I'M THORRY! I WERMEMBER NOW! I'M WEALLY THORRY!

SLAP

SLAP

NO HALF -ASSED RUNNING!

AND WATCH YOUR FORM OUT THERE.

YES, SIR.

THAT'S NOT TRUE. JUST HANG IN THERE, AKITSUKI-KUN.

NO, HE'S JUST A BULLY.

B-BECAUSE HE KNOWS YOU'VE GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO BE A GREAT ATHLETE!

MUMBLE

MUMBLE

SHIT! WHY AM I THE ONLY ONE HE PICKS ON? STUPID, MACHO JERK!

HA, HA. YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT. JUST GO ON HOME.

B-BUT...

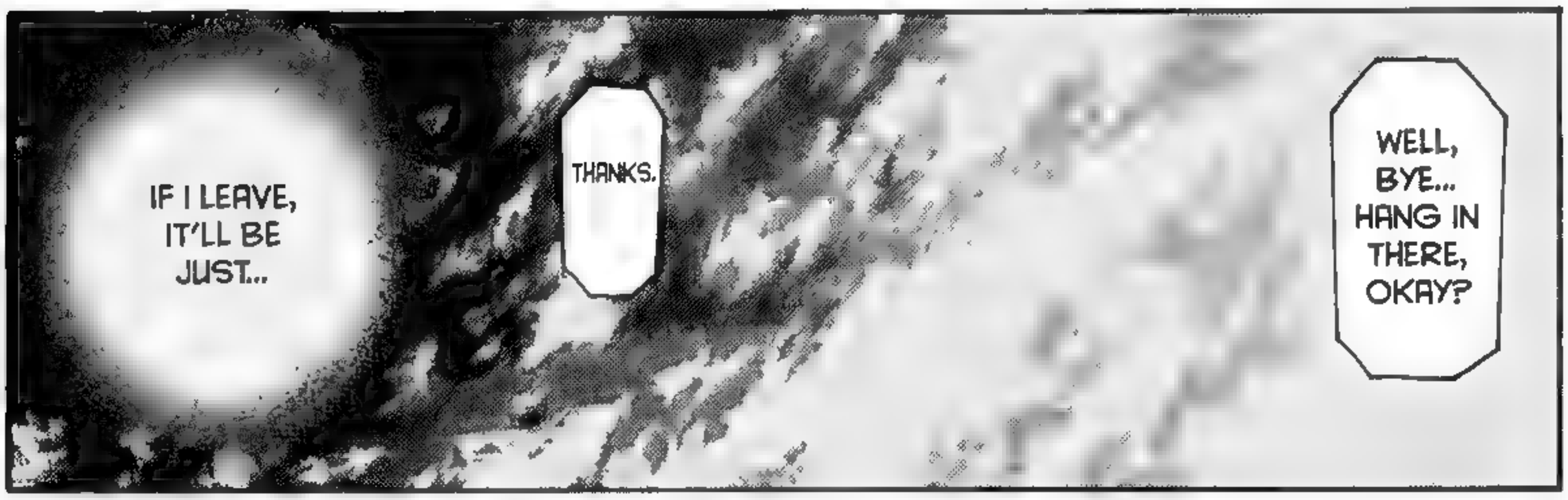
I-I'LL...

DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME. I WON'T SKIP PRACTICE ANYMORE!

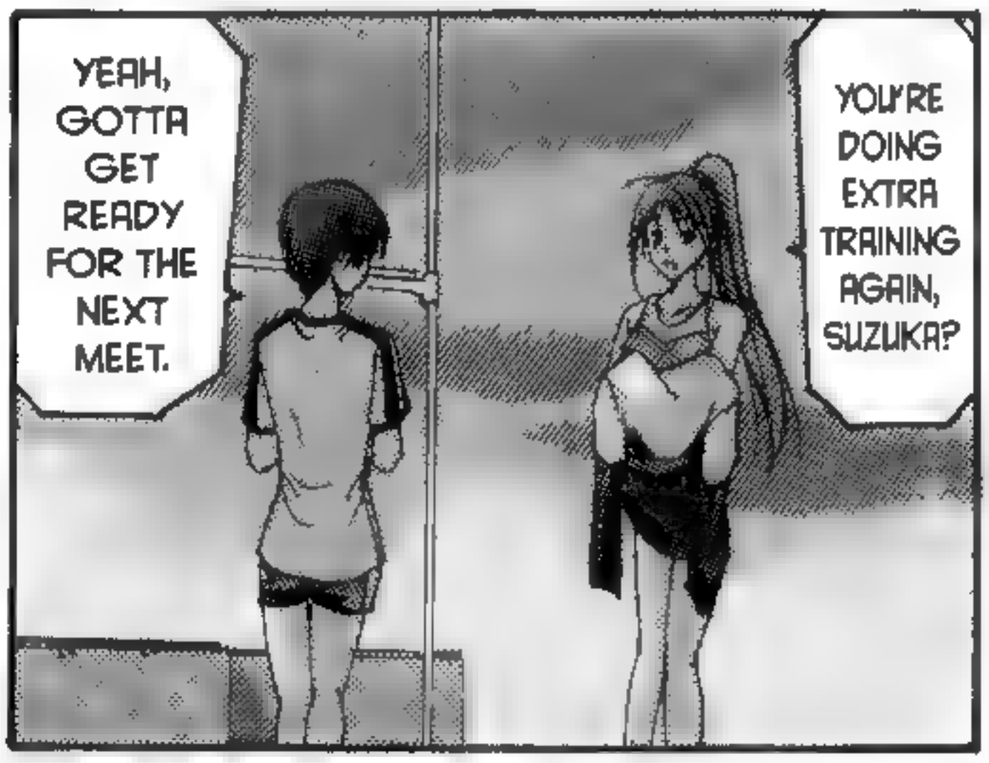
OKAY?

...WAIT FOR YOU RIGHT HERE...

THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M WORRIED ABOUT...
OKAY...

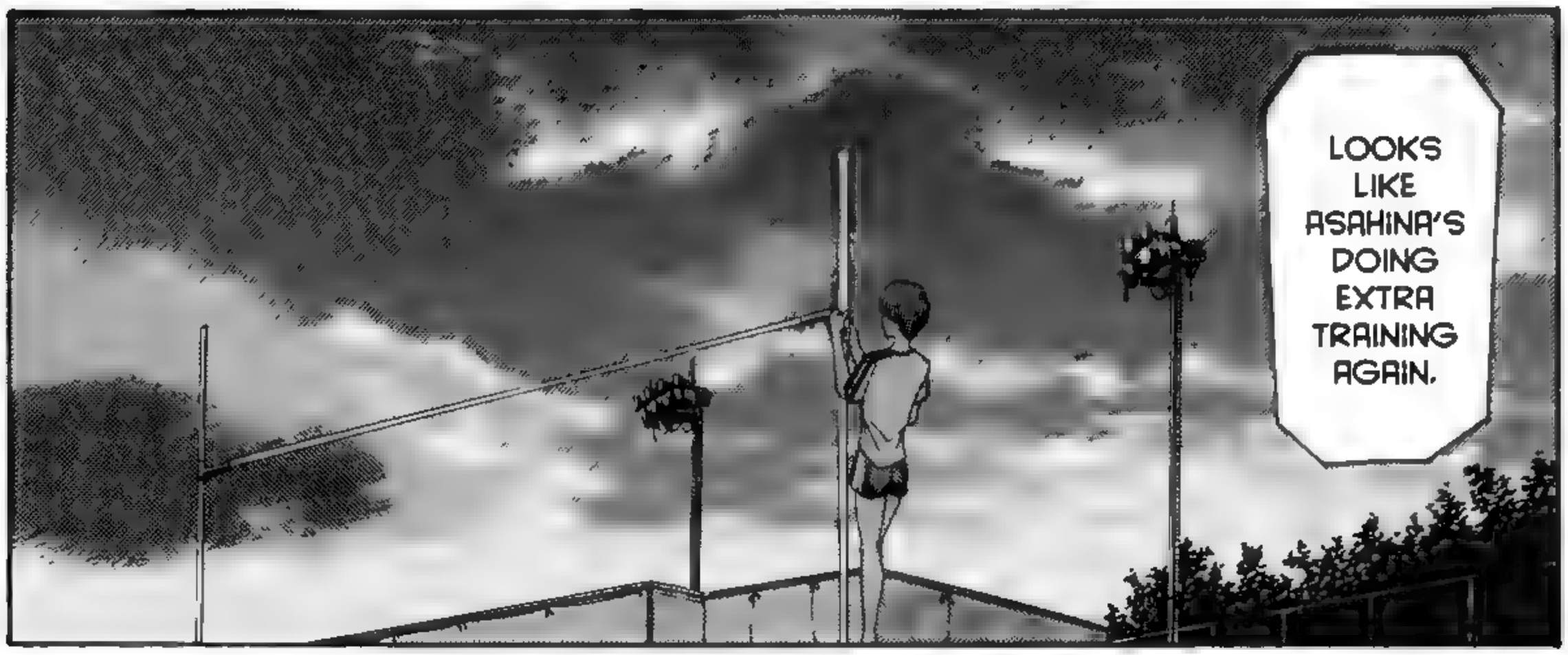

IF I LEAVE, IT'LL BE JUST...
THANKS.
WELL, BYE... HANG IN THERE, OKAY?

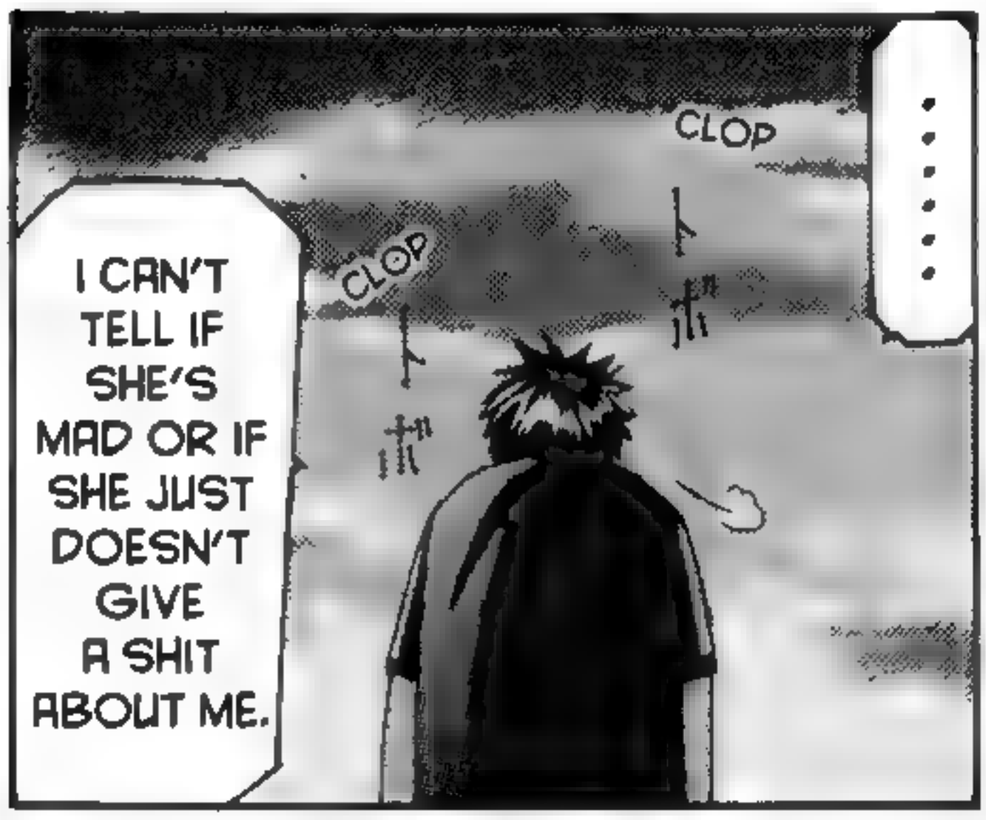
FWOOSH
HAHH!


YEAH, GOTTA GET READY FOR THE NEXT MEET.
YOU'RE DOING EXTRA TRAINING AGAIN, SUZUKA?

...ASAHINA-SAN AND AKITSUKI-KUN ALL ALONE TOGETHER.

HAHH.
HAHH.
HAHH.
PHEW.


LOOKS LIKE ASAHINA'S DOING EXTRA TRAINING AGAIN.


CLOP
CLOP
. . . . . .
I CAN'T TELL IF SHE'S MAD OR IF SHE JUST DOESN'T GIVE A SHIT ABOUT ME.

AS LONG AS IT'S JUST THE TWO OF US HERE, I MIGHT AS WELL TALK TO HER.
OF COURSE, SHE'LL PROBA-BLY JUST IGNORE ME, BUT...

I'M STARV-ING. MAYBE I'LL JUST FINISH MY SPRINTS AND GO HOME.
GOD, I'M SUCH AN IDIOT...

I WONDER IF AKITSUKI-KUN IS DONE YET...

I'M SO WORRIED. I JUST CAN'T GO HOME.

ALL ALONE

MAYBE I'LL GO OUT AND CHECK ON HIM ONE MORE TIME.

.....

PANT

I...

I FINALLY FINISHED.

PANT

...ASA-HINA'S HEADING HOME.

LOOKS LIKE...

.....

ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS THE HIGH JUMP!

SHIT! YOU COULD AT LEAST SAY GOOD-BYE!

FWUP

WELL, EXCUSE ME!

HUH?

SWIP

THERE'S SOME-THING I FORGOT TO TELL YOU.

!?

SHOCK

ASAHINA!

I THOUGHT YOU WENT HOME.

WHAT?

OUCH!

CRACK

ピキ

YANK

ｸｲ

URRMPH!

THAT'S...

...WHAT YOU FOR-GOT TO TELL ME?

YOU ALWAYS HALF-ASS YOUR WAY THROUGH THE COOL-DOWN.

MAKE SURE YOU STRETCH PROPERLY AFTER EVERY PRACTICE!

BY THE TIME YOU HIT TOP SPEED, YOUR FORM IS ALWAYS WAY OFF.

YOU KEEP PUSH-ING TOO HARD WHEN YOU START YOUR SPRINT.

OUCH!

SQUEEZE

THAT'S NOT THE ONLY THING.

YOU'D BETTER WORK ON YOUR FORM.

I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU RUN FOR A WHILE NOW . . . . . .

OH, YEAH...OF COURSE!

IT'S JUST YOU AND ME!

WHO ELSE WOULD I WATCH? YOU'RE THE ONLY OTHER PERSON HERE.

Y-YOU'VE BEEN...

...WATCH-ING ME?

SO ASAHI-NA'S ACTU-ALLY BEEN THINKING ABOUT ME.

WHOA!

THINGS AREN'T QUITE LIKE THEY USED TO BE, BUT...

THIS IS GOOD ENOUGH FOR ME.

AH.

カシャ

CLINK

UH... UM...I FOR-GOT SOME-THING.

SO I FIGURED I'D STOP BY AND SAY HI.

OH, I JUST FIN-ISHED.

HUH? HONOKA-CHAN?

I THOUGHT YOU WENT HOME.

I WAS JUST GIVING YOU SOME ADVICE... FROM ONE ATHLETE TO ANOTHER.

ASAHINA WAS JUST TELLING ME ABOUT HOW MUCH I SUCK.

APPAR-ENTLY I CAN'T RUN WORTH SHIT!

THAT'S RIGHT...

O-OH...

. . . . . .

I GUESS ASAHINA-SAN IS JUST LIKE THE CAPTAIN...

WELL, I'M GOING HOME. SEE YOU, GUYS.

OKAY, BYE.

SO I GUESS...

...SHE DOESN'T FEEL THE SAME WAY I DO.

SHE JUST WANTS AKITSUKI-KUN TO BE THE BEST ATHLETE HE CAN BE.

## CHARACTER PROFILE NO. 11

**KAZUKI TSUDA**
(DIED AT AGE 15)

**DATE OF BIRTH**—SEPTEMBER 29
(LIBRA)
**HEIGHT**—5'7"
**WEIGHT**—140 LBS
**BLOOD TYPE**—B

**LIKES**
- SUZUKA
- TRACK
- RAW EGGS

**DISLIKES**
- FORMALITIES
- ANYTHING HARD
- BITTER VEGETABLES

**MOTTO**—PROBLEMS BEGET SOLUTIONS

THWUMP

HUH?

YOU MADE IT THROUGH A WEEK WITHOUT SKIPPING PRACTICE, AKITSUKI.

I'VE BEEN WATCHING YOU ALL WEEK.

OKAY, THAT'S ALL FOR TODAY!

YEAH, WELL, ASAHINA GAVE ME A LOT OF ADVICE AND STUFF.

WAIT, YOU'VE BEEN WATCH-ING ME?

HMM...

A DAY OFF...

NO PRAC-TICE THIS SUNDAY.

YOU CAN TAKE THE DAY OFF.

ALL RIGHT, EVERY-BODY! TIME FOR OUR COOL-DOWN.

YES, SIR.

# SUZUKA

## #30 LINE OF FOCUS

301

# YAMATO AK

ASAHIYU BATHS

A DAY OFF...

EVERY TIME SHE HAS A DAY OFF, SHE COMES HERE TO PRAY.

IT'S BEEN ABOUT TWO YEARS...

FLAP

DING DONG

ピンポーン

HUH?

I GUESS ASAHINA WILL BE HEAD-ING OUT TO VISIT...

...KAZUKI TSUDA'S GRAVE AGAIN.

HUH?

WEREN'T YOU THE NEWS-PAPER GIRL?

CLICK

カチャ

HI! I'M WITH THE CABLE COM-PANY!

NO KID-DING.

WELL, I DON'T REALLY WATCH CABLE, SO...

CREAK

YEAH, BUT TODAY I'M SELLING CABLE DOOR TO DOOR.

I'VE GOT TWO JOBS!

CREAK

NO, REALLY... I BARELY EVEN HAVE TIME TO READ MY NEWSPAPER.

BUT WAIT! THE CABLE IS ALREADY HOOKED UP. ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SIGN UP.

OKAY?

THUNK

ガゴ

IF YOU JOIN UP TODAY, YOU GET A FREE PAIR OF TICKETS TO A WATER PARK.

I ONLY HAVE TWO TICKETS LEFT!

FLIP

LIAR! I BET OU'VE GOT TONS MORE.

NOT AFTER WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME.

大和

YOU DON'T TRUST ANYONE, DO YOU?

. . . . . .

FINE! I'LL LET YOU HAVE THESE TICKETS.

GO HAVE SOME FUN WITH YOUR GIRL-FRIEND.

CLOP

CLOP

HEY, WAIT!

BUT THINK ABOUT SIGN-ING UP, OKAY?

. . . . . .

BUT I DON'T EVEN HAVE A GIRL-FRIEND.

THAT GIRL GAVE ME TWO TICKETS TO AN AMUSEMENT PARK, AND I TOOK ASAHINA.

WATER PARK

WATER PARK

NOW THAT I THINK ABOUT IT, THIS IS KIND OF LIKE WHAT HAPPENED LAST TIME...

...LOVE YOU, ASAHINA.

I...

AND I ENDED UP SAYING...

I'M SORRY.

SLAM

ASAHIYU BATHS

LIKE HELL I'M GOING!

THESE TICKETS ARE CURSED!

.....

DRIP 9" 9" 9" DRIP

COM-ING RIGHT UP

ONE ORDER OF COLD CHINESE NOODLES PLEASE.

キーン DONG

コーン DING

HUH?

A WATER PARK?

ABOUT YOU INVITING SUZUKA-CHAN?

YEAH.

Y-YEAH...

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

SLURP

THINK ABOUT IT...IF A GUY AND A GIRL GO TO A WATER PARK TOGETHER, THAT PRETTY MUCH TELLS YOU WHAT KIND OF A RELATIONSHIP THEY HAVE.

WH-WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

LET ME SEE...

HOW CAN I DUMB THIS DOWN ENOUGH SO THAT AN IDIOT LIKE YOU WILL UNDER-STAND IT.

WHAT?

I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.

. . . . . .

LOOK, LIFE ISN'T LIKE SOME STUPID MANGA LOVE COMIC.

BESIDES, YOU AL-READY WENT OUT WITH HER ONCE, AND GOT SHOT DOWN.

YOU REALLY WANNA GO THROUGH THAT ALL OVER AGAIN?

. . . . . .

YOU'VE GOTTA LEARN FROM YOUR MIS-TAKES, MAN.

NO GIRL WOULD GO WITH YOU UNLESS YOU WERE ALREADY GOING OUT... OR SHE REALLY LIKED YOU.

TELLING *ME* THAT AIN'T GONNA DO YOU ANY GOOD.

YEAH, BUT SWIMMING IS A GREAT WAY TO BUILD MUSCLES WITHOUT PUTTING TOO MUCH STRAIN ON YOUR BODY.

PLANS?

AND YOU'RE JUST GONNA INVITE HER AT THE LAST MINUTE?

SHE PROBABLY...

DON'T YOU THINK SUZUKA-CHAN ALREADY HAS PLANS FOR TOMORROW?

...DOES HAVE PLANS.

I BET SHE'S GOING TO VISIT KAZUKI TSUDA'S GRAVE...

I KNOW.

YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN, SO WHY EVEN BOTHER ASKING HER?

YOU HAVE ABSO-LUTELY NO CHANCE.

I GUESS I'LL JUST FORGET IT.

WATER PARK

I DON'T WANNA HEAR HER SAY, "I'VE GOT OTHER PLANS."

I'M GONNA BE SO BORED TOMOR-ROW.

WHAT SHOULD I DO?

HON-OKA-CHAN.

UH...UM... AKITSUKI-KUN!

SURE IS HOT TODAY.

YEAH, WELL, IT IS JULY.

UH...

?

YEAH, PROB-ABLY.

DO YOU...LIKE THE HEAT, AKITSUKI-KUN?

NO... NOT REALLY.

FLAP

FLAP

I-IT'LL PROBABLY BE HOT TOMORROW TOO.

YOU SURE? WELL, OKAY THEN...

YANK

WH-WHAT? YEAH, I'M FINE.

OH, REALLY? ME NEI-THER. I CAN'T STAND IT!

I WAS JUST...

?

WELL, ACTU-ALLY I...

ARE YOU OKAY, HONOKA-CHAN?

I WAS WONDER-ING...

...IF YOU'D LIKE TO GO...

...TO THE WATER PARK WITH ME.

ME?

HUH?

HMM...

I-IF YOU CAN'T, IT'S NO BIG DEAL.

FLAPPA

FLAPPA

HEY, WHAT'RE YOU GUYS TALKING ABOUT?

THE CABLE GIRL GAVE ME FREE TICKETS YESTER-DAY, SO...

YIPPEE!

I WANNA GO, TOO!

HEY, ARE THOSE TICKETS FOR THE NEW WATER PARK?

HASHIBA...

I HEARD THEY HAVE THIS REALLY HUGE WATER-SLIDE. ARE YOU GOING TOMORROW?

TAKE ME WITH YOU, AKIT-SUKI!

I WANNA GO, TOO!

I JUST LOVE WATER PARKS!

HOP-ING TO GO WITH AKIT-SUKI-KUN...

HUH? B-BUT I WAS...

HUH?

SHOCK

SORRY, WHO ARE YOU AGAIN?

TRACK SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT KENJI KOBAYAKAWA-KUN TOOK FIRST PLACE IN THE 200-METER SPRINT

I NEVER SAID I WAS GOING...

W- WAIT!

IF ALL FOUR OF US GO, IT'LL BE REALLY FUN.

AH...

HASHIBA! WAIT!

WHOOSH

COME TO THE WATER PARK WITH US TO-MORROW, SUZUKA!

SUZUKA!

WATER PARK?

YEAH, THE FOUR OF US ARE GOING TOMORRO WANNA COME ALONG?

HUH?

THE MORE THE MERRIER.

D-DON'T PRES-SURE HER, HASHIBA-SAN...

COME ON, SUZUKA. LET'S GO!

A-ASAHINA-SAN TOO?

SHE'LL NEVER GO ANY-WAY.

*YOU HAVE ABSO-LUTELY NO CHANCE.*

*YOU ALREADY KNOW WHAT'S GONNA HAPPEN, SO WHY EVEN BOTHER ASKING HER?*

...SHE'LL BE AT TSUDA'S TOMORROW ...

I KNOW...

チラ…

GLANCE

HUH?

ALL RIGHT! ALL FIVE OF US CAN GO!

GET OFF ME, MIKI!

D- DID SHE DECIDE TO GO...

...BE-CAUSE OF ME?

SURE... SOUNDS LIKE FUN.

N-
NAH...

OF COURSE NOT.

WHAT-EVER...

Y-YEAH, I'M FINE.

YOU OKAY, AKIT-SUKI?

THE IMPORTANT THING IS... TOMORROW I GET TO GO TO THE WATER PARK WITH ASAHINA.

IT MIGHT NOT BE SUCH A BORING SUN-DAY AFTER ALL!

## CHARACTER PROFILE NO. 12

### EMERSON ARIMA
(HIGH SCHOOL SOPHOMORE)

**DATE OF BIRTH**—JULY 7 (CANCER)
**HEIGHT**—5'9"
**WEIGHT**—158 LBS
**BLOOD TYPE**—A

**LIKES**
- TRACK
- FISH *AQUA PAZZA*
- *SHIROI KOIBITO* COOKIES

**DISLIKES**
- KAZUKI TSUDA
- BEING TOLD WHAT TO DO
- PICKLES

**GOAL**—TO RUN THE 100-METER DASH IN UNDER TEN SECONDS

WOO

WOO

I SWEAR SHE LOOKED AT ME RIGHT BEFORE SHE DECIDED TO COME ALONG.

GLANCE

I THOUGHT...

MAYBE...

SHE WANTED TO GO WITH ME!

SORRY I TOOK SO LONG.

FWAH

...ASAHINA ALWAYS SPENT HER DAYS OFF VISITING KAZUKI'S GRAVE. SO WHAT'S SHE DOING HERE AT THE WATER PARK?

# SUZUKA

## #31 FIREWORKS

A-ASA-HINA'S BOOBS...

...ARE ACTUALLY PRETTY BIG...

STARE

WHOA!

KENJI KOBAYAKAWA-KUN (YOU KNOW THE REST)

QUIT STARING!

TCH...

I'M NOT STARING.

GLARE

THUMP

THUMP

AKITSUKI-KUN IS LOOKING AT ME.

YOU'RE SUCH A SICKO.

YOU LITTLE PERVERT, AKITSUKI!

I WASN'T STARING!

QUIT CALLING ME A PERVERT!

PUT ON YOUR HOTTEST BIKINI, AND YOU'LL KNOCK HIM DEAD.

WELL, THERE MUST BE A CUTE GUY YOU COULD INVITE.

THANKS FOR THE TICKETS, BUT I DON'T EVEN HAVE ANYONE TO GO WITH...

REALLY?

I'LL DO MY BEST!

I EVEN BOUGHT A NEW BIKINI.

I'VE GOTTA GET BACK IN THE GAME.

MAYBE SUZUKA CAME BECAUSE SHE WANTED TO SPEND TIME WITH ME.

HEY, SUZUKA! LET'S GO ON THE WATER-SLIDE.

IT'S THE WORLD'S TALLEST!

WHAT?

AH!

QUIT RUN-NING! YOU'LL SLIP, MIKI!

WE'VE GOTTA HURRY BEFORE IT GETS TOO CROWDED.

GLANCE

AH... COME WITH US, AKITSUKI-KUN.

HUH?

YANK

COME ON, SAKURAI. LET'S GO!

THERE'S A POOL OVER THERE.

COME ON!

B-BUT...

UH... THAT'S OKAY.

I'VE GOTTA FIND A WAY...

...TO GET CLOSER TO ASAHINA.

I'LL JUST HANG OUT HERE.

WOO

WOO

ALL ALONE

IT'S BEEN AN HOUR.

HOW MANY TIMES CAN THEY SLIDE DOWN THAT THING?

THEY'RE HAVING WAY TOO MUCH FUN.

SHIT.

MAYBE YOUR BUTT IS JUST TOO BIG, MIKI.

MY BIKINI KEEPS RIDING UP.

SPLASH

AH... THERE HE IS!

AKIT-SUKI-KUN!

WHOOSH

HON-OKA-CHAN.

YOINK

キョロ

YOINK

キョロ

A-AREN'T YOU GONNA SWIM, AKITSUKI-KUN?

IT'S REALLY FUN.

NO, I'LL JUST HANG OUT HERE.

GLANCE

ちら…

HE WANTS TO STAY NEAR ASAHINA-SAN.

HERE GOES....

...

H-HEY, AKIT-SUKI-KUN.

HUH?

DO YOU THINK MY BIKINI IS TOO SMALL?

IT FEELS A LITTLE TIGHT IN THE CHEST...

WHOOSH

OH, THERE YOU ARE, SAKURAI.

HUH?

LET'S GO CHECK OUT THE WATER-SLIDE.

UH... I...

WHAT?

HE DIDN'T EVEN NOTICE ME.

AH! A BUG JUST FLEW IN MY EYE!

W-WAIT, KOBAY-AKAWA-KUN!

YANK

COME ON, HURRY!

PLUP

NOW'S MY CHANCE!

ASAHINA'S COMING OVER HERE ALL BY HERSELF!

HUH?

RUB

THUMP

MAYBE SHE'LL WANNA COME WITH ME.

THUMP

UH...

AH... ASAHINA! I'M GOING TO GET A SODA. WANT ONE?

HUH?

FWUP

I'M THIRSTY, TOO, AKITSUKI! GET ME A COLA.

OKAY.

LET'S HAVE A DRINK, AND THEN GO CHECK OUT THE WAVE POOL.

HURRY IT UP! WHAT DO YOU WANT, SUZUKA?

UH... I'LL HAVE A MELON SODA.

...SHE DID JUST WANNA GO TO THE WATER PARK AFTER ALL.

. . . . .

OH, MAYBE...

OKAY.

...GOT TO TALK TO AKITSUKI-KUN AT ALL.

I HARDLY...

YEAH!

LET'S GO GRAB SOME FOOD BEFORE WE HEAD HOME.

WHOA!

FWUMP

HANG ON A SEC. MY SHOE-LACE...

UH...I DON'T CARE.

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO EAT, SAKURAI-SAN?

WAHH! THAT WAS SO AWE-SOME! I HAD SO MUCH FUN!

ME, TOO!

SUGER BABY

AH!

SOME FRIENDS THEY ARE.

NONE OF THEM EVEN NOTICED THAT I'M STILL OVER HERE.

ASAHINA...

...

IS SHE WAITING FOR ME?

ズッ

S- SORRY.

STEP
STEP
HUH?
UM...
STEP
STEP
FWOOSH
H-HEY, ARE YOU—

POP

POP

POP

POP

WOW!

WHAT THE—?

AREN'T THEY PRETTY, AKITSUKI-KUN?

OH, YEAH, I FORGOT, THEY ALWAYS HAVE FIRE-WORKS HERE ON THE WEEK-ENDS.

WHOA, LOOK!

HUH?

POP

POP

YEAH... FIRE-ORKS.

FIRE-WORKS.

AKIT-SUKI-KUN AND...

ASAHINA-SAN ARE GONE...

TH-THEY'RE JUST LIKE...

...THE FIRE-WORKS WE SAW WHEN WE WENT TO FANTASY LAND TOGETHER.

HUH?

AH...

N-NO, I MEAN...

O-OH NO! I CAN'T BE-LIEVE I JUST SAID THAT?

ASA-HINA...

.....!

LET'S GO!

THEY'RE PROB-ABLY LOOKING FOR US.

*BESIDES, YOU ALREADY WENT OUT WITH HER ONCE, AND GOT SHOT DOWN.*

*YOU REALLY WANNA GO THROUGH THAT ALL OVER AGAIN?*

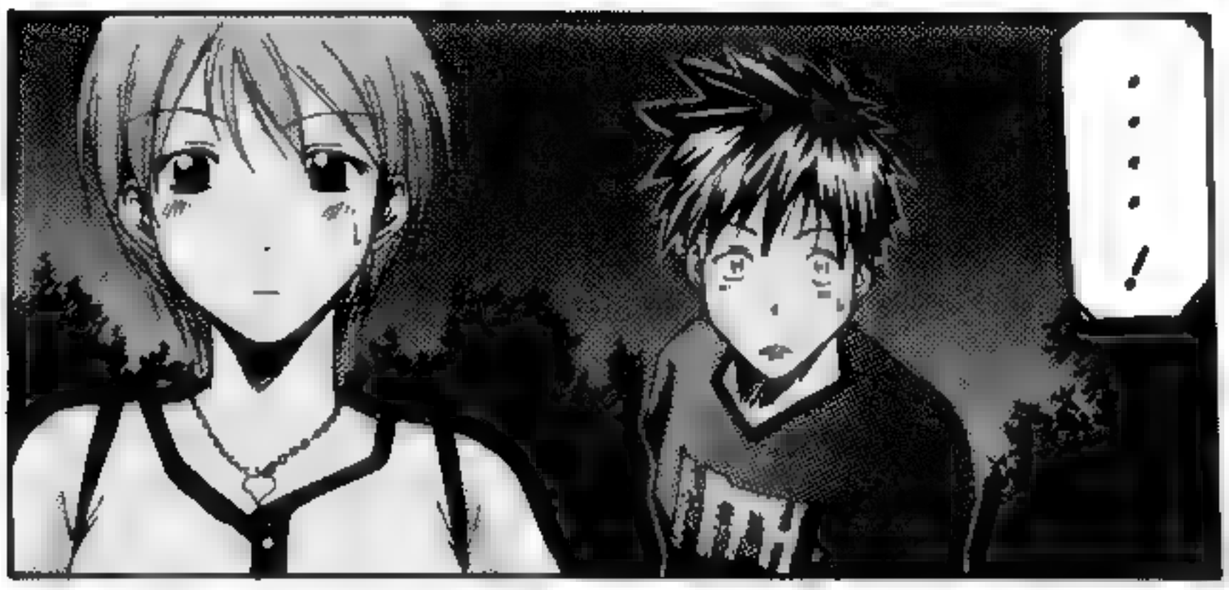
THUMP
THUMP

ドキ…

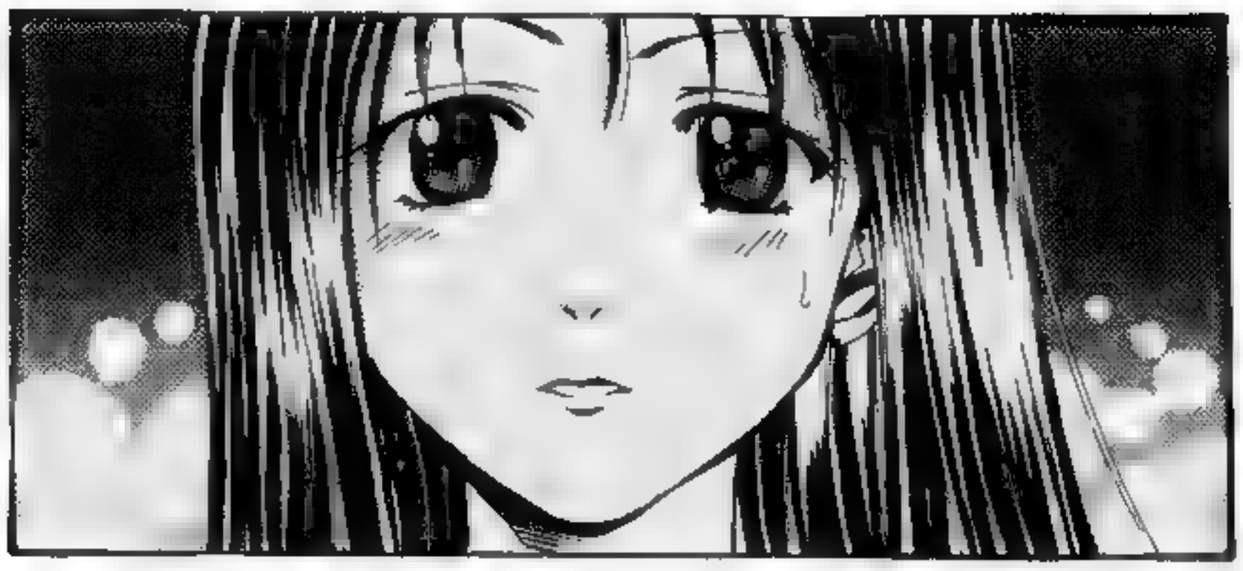
I...

THUMP
THUMP

ドキ…


. . . . !

WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TWO DOING?
AH! THERE THEY ARE!



. . . . . .

SWIP
AH...

COME ON, LET'S GO EAT.

SORRY.

JESUS, AKIT-SUKI, YOU'RE LIKE A LITTLE KID!

SORRY. YAMATO-KUN'S SHOE-LACES CAME UNTIED.

WHAT THE HECK WERE YOU DOING?

GEEZ, WE'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU GUYS.

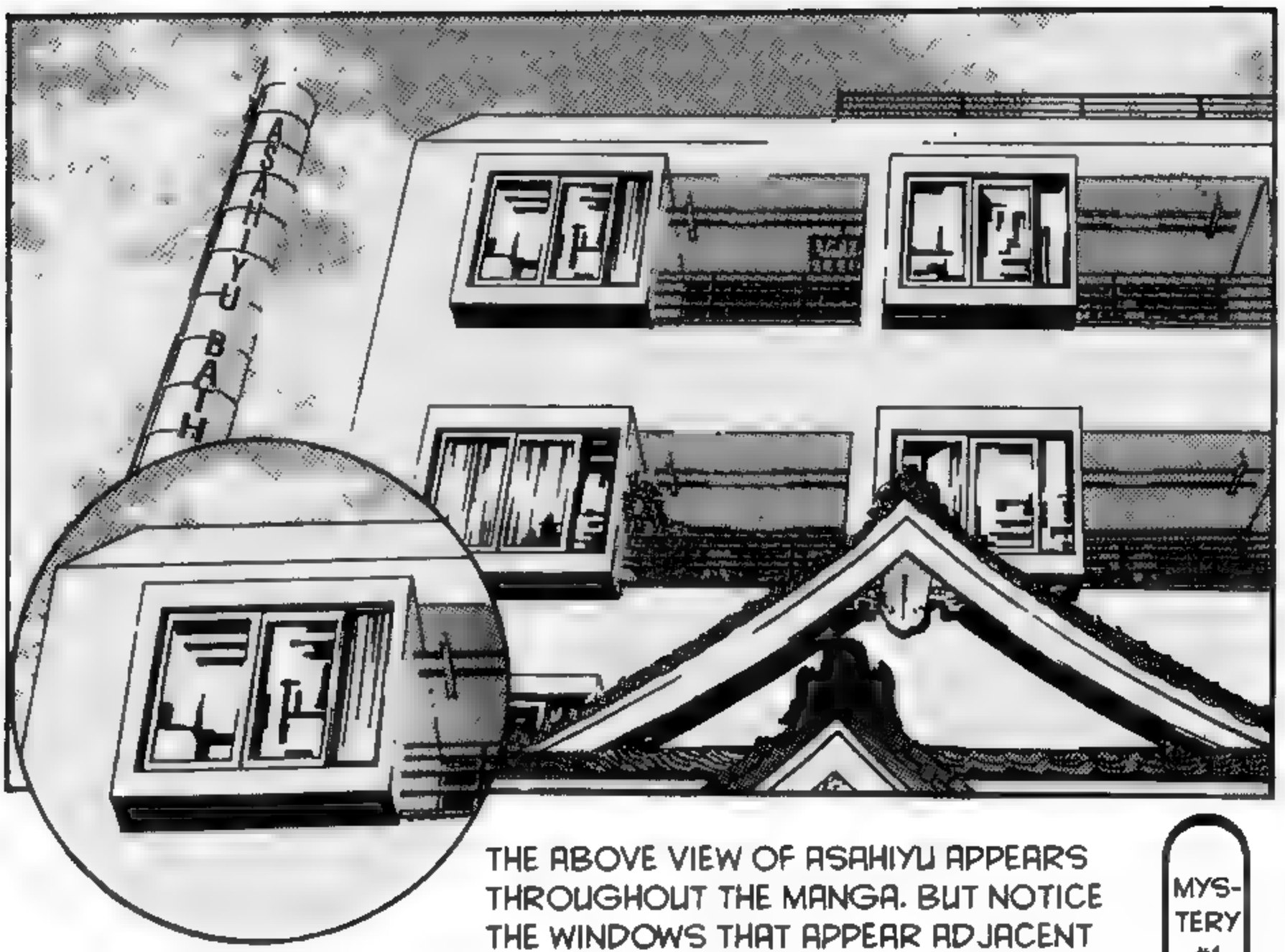
NOW SHE'S DEFI-NITELY GONNA HATE ME.

AH, TO HELL WITH IT!

WHO KNOWS WHAT SHE'S THINKING?

CONTINUED IN VOLUME 5

# BONUS MANGA— S.M.R. (SUZUKA MYSTERY REPORT)




THE ABOVE VIEW OF ASAHIYU APPEARS THROUGHOUT THE MANGA. BUT NOTICE THE WINDOWS THAT APPEAR ADJACENT TO THE VERANDA OF EACH ROOM. NO SUCH WINDOW IS VISIBLE INSIDE YAMATO'S ROOM. WHAT ON EARTH ARE THESE WINDOWS?

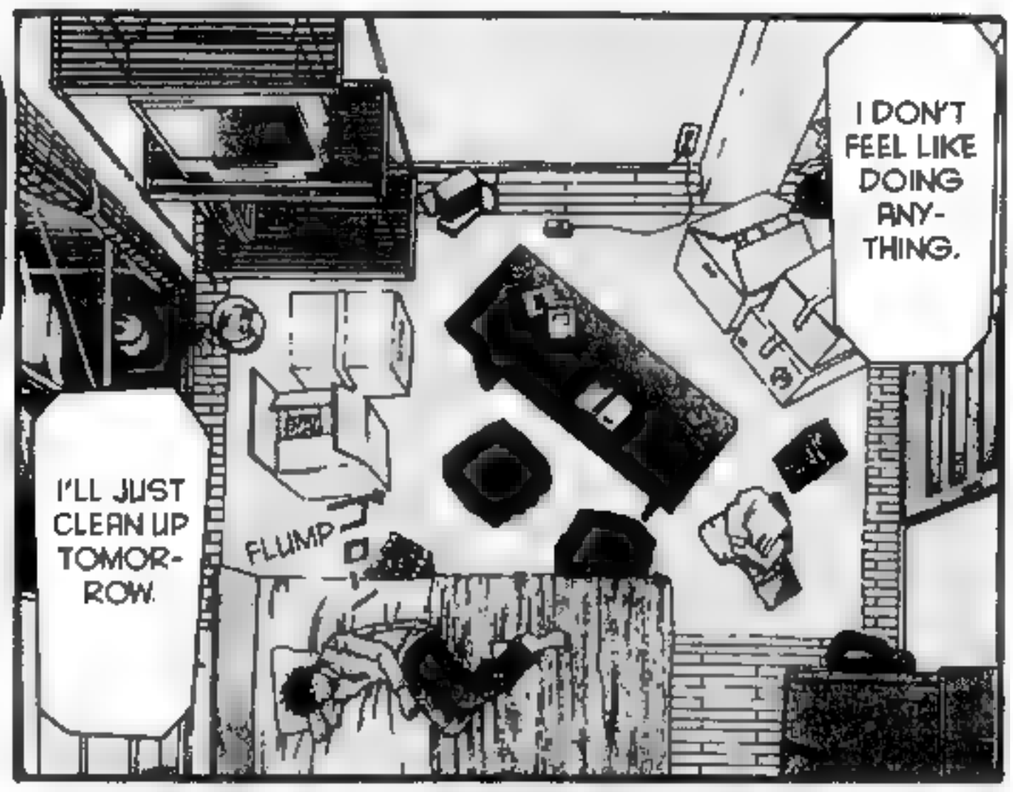
MYS-TERY #1

IT IS A MYSTERY INDEED.

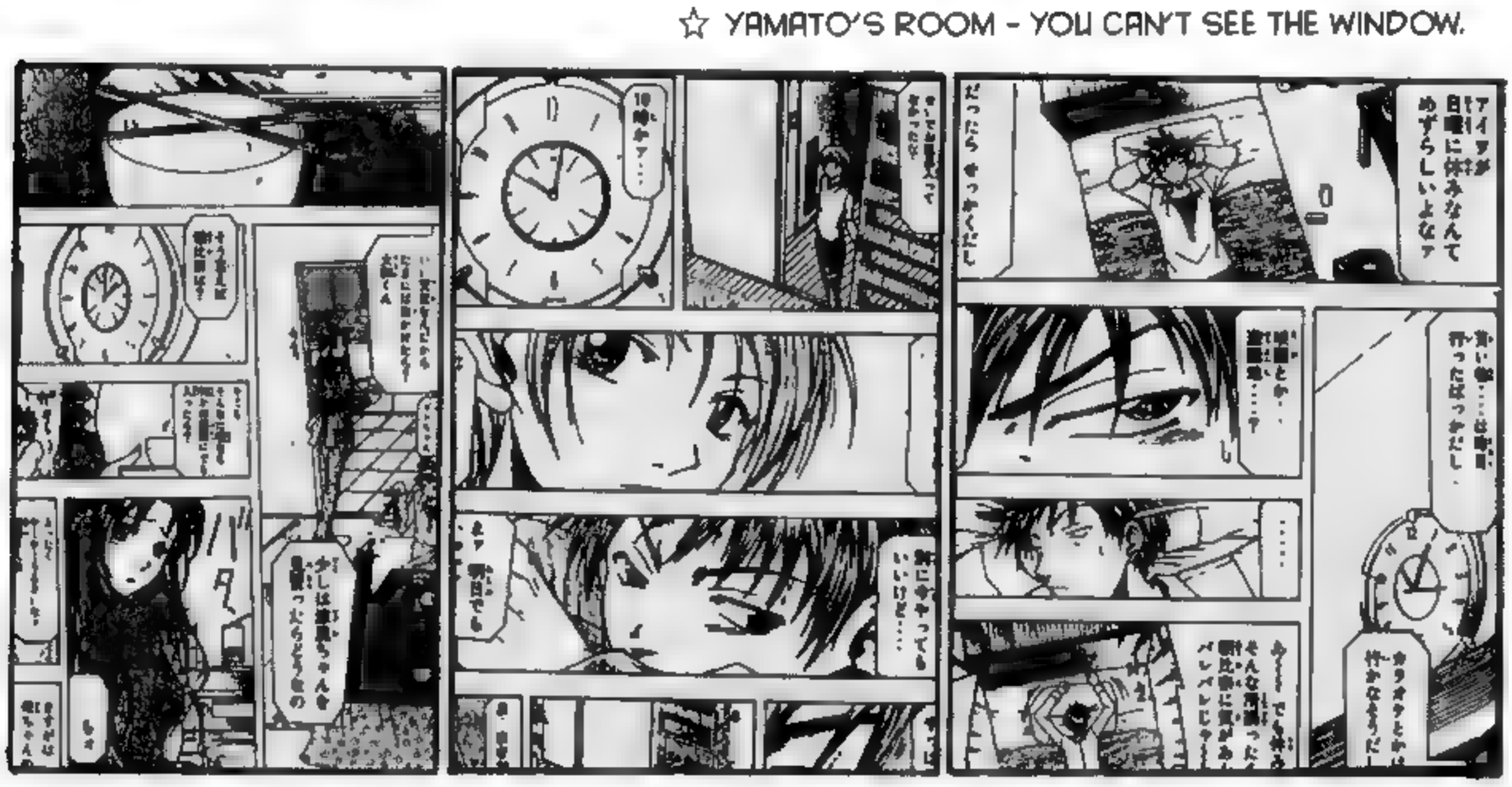
# THE MYSTERIES OF THE ASAHIYU LADIES APARTMENT COMPLEX

THE BOTTOM PANELS SHOW THE ROOMS OF YAMATO, SUZUKA, AND THE LANDLADY. WHY DOES EACH ROOM HAVE THE EXACT SAME CLOCK? IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT THEY EACH, COINCIDENTALLY, PURCHASED THE SAME CLOCK. PERHAPS WE SHOULD ASSUME THAT THIS IS THE STANDARD ASAHIYU "WELCOME GIFT" GIVEN TO ALL NEW TENANTS.

MYS-TERY #2

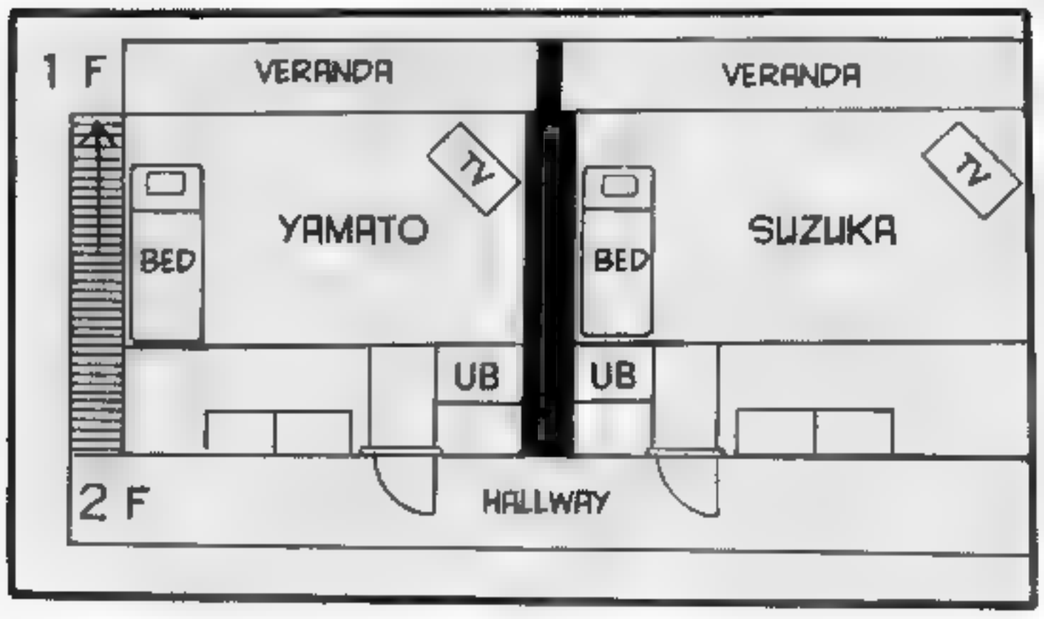


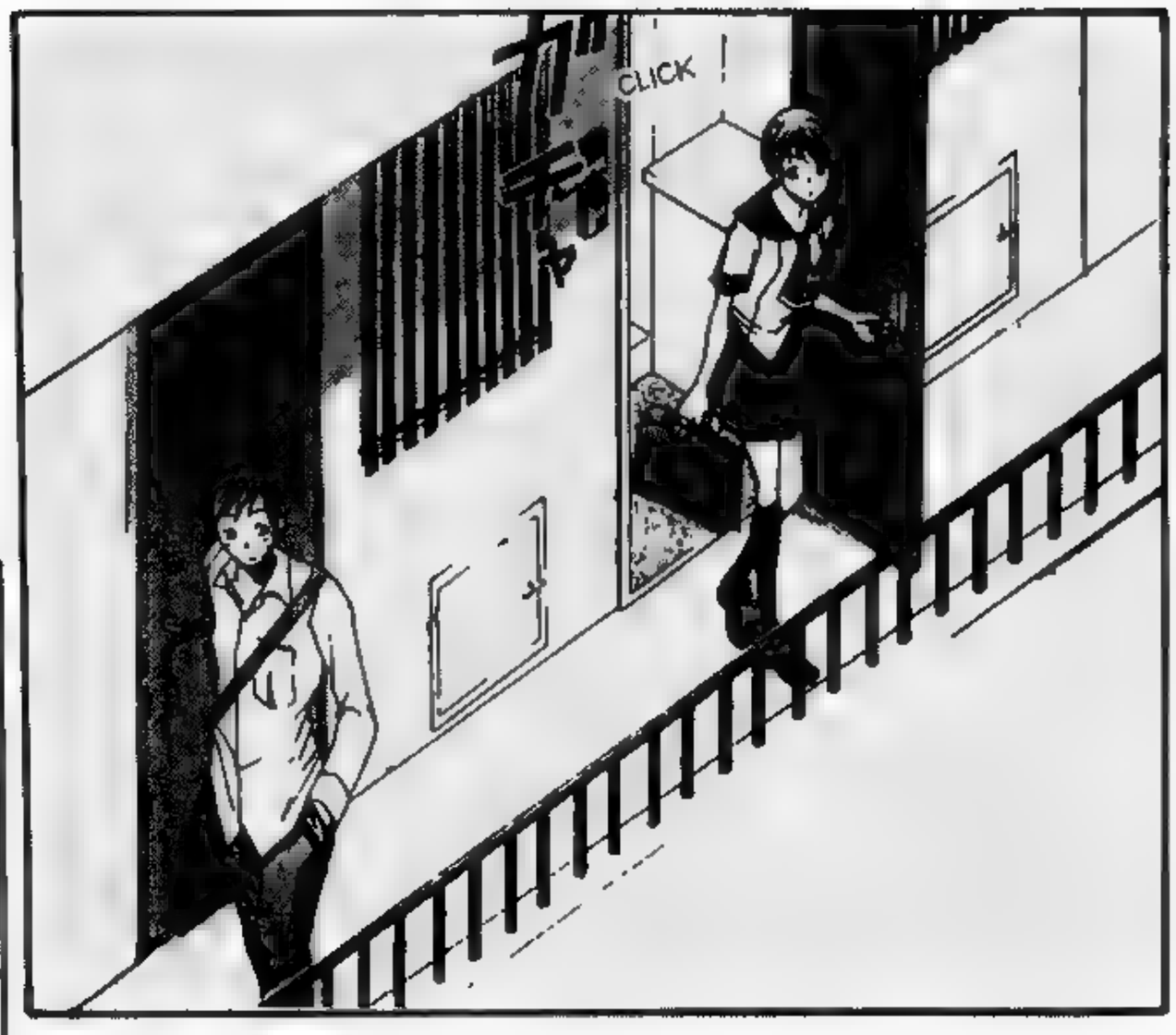

☆ YAMATO'S ROOM - YOU CAN'T SEE THE WINDOW.



THE PANEL ON THE RIGHT SHOWS YAMATO AND SUZUKA LEAVING FOR SCHOOL. BASED ON WHAT WE SEE IN THIS DRAWING, ONE WOULD ASSUME THAT THEIR ROOMS ARE LAID OUT IN THE MANNER SHOWN IN THE DIAGRAM BELOW.

MYSTERY #3

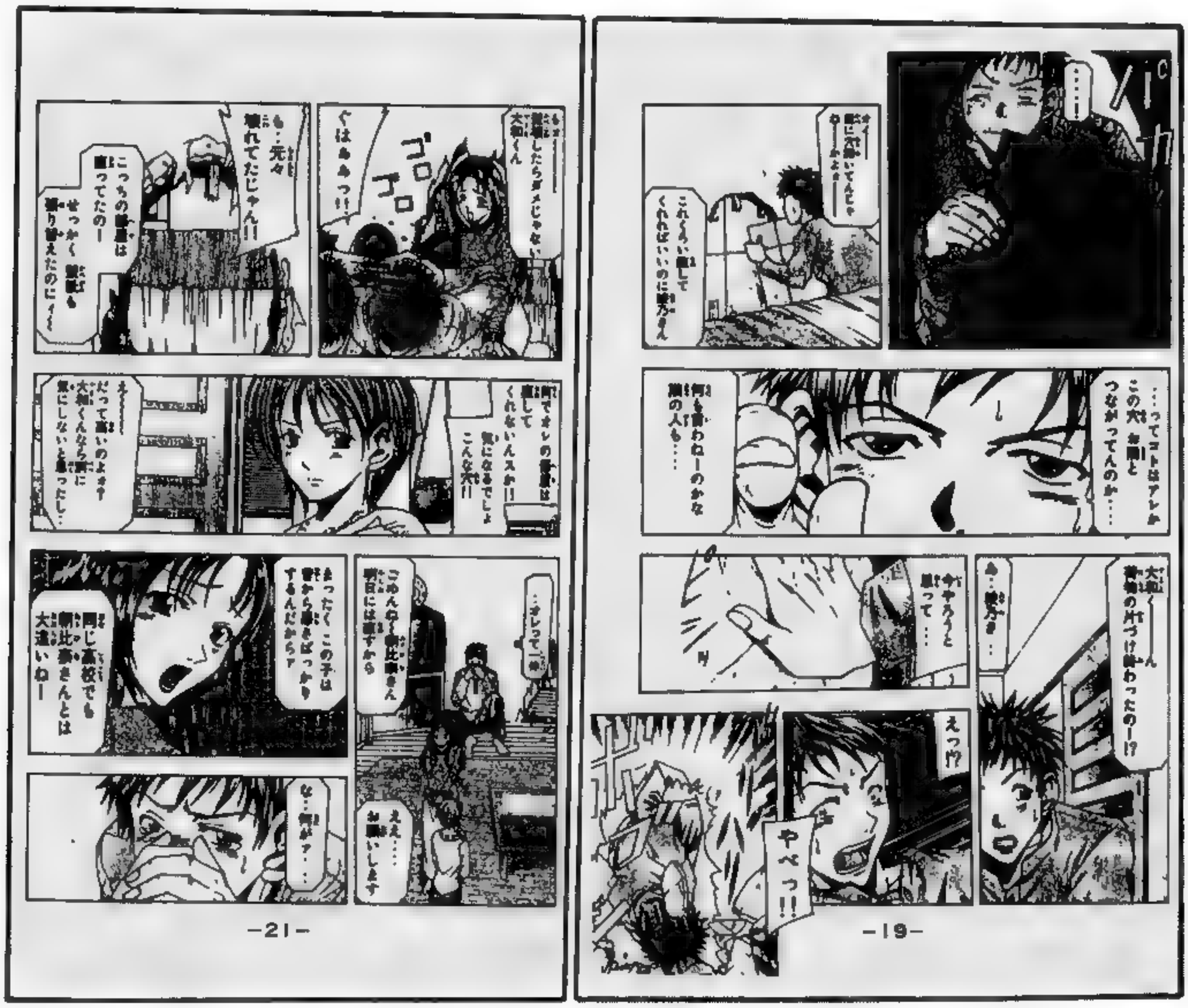



☆

HOWEVER, THROUGHOUT THE STORY, WE SEE YAMATO CRAWLING THROUGH THE HOLE IN THE WALL TO ENTER SUZUKA'S ROOM. THE HOLE IS SITUATED NEAR YAMATO'S BED, AND WHEN YAMATO GOES THROUGH THE HOLE, HE FINDS HIMSELF NEXT TO SUZUKA'S TV. ACCORDING TO THE DIAGRAM, CRAWLING THROUGH THE HOLE SHOULD PUT YAMATO RIGHT SMACK-DAB IN THE STAIRWELL.

PERHAPS THIS HOLE PASSES THROUGH ANOTHER DIMENSION TO END UP CONNECTING TO SUZUKA'S ROOM. WHO KNOWS, THE NEXT TIME YAMATO STEPS THROUGH THAT HOLE HE MIGHT END UP IN A WHOLE DIFFERENT WORLD.



RESEARCH BY THE SEO DANDY STUDIO

# Translation Notes

Japanese is a tricky language for most Westerners, and translation is often more an art than a science. For your edification and reading pleasure, here are notes on some of the places where we could have gone in a different direction or where a Japanese cultural reference is used.

## Suzukaze, page 5

The second character in Suzuka's name can be read as *ka* or *kaze*. *Kaze* means wind, so Kazuki jokingly calls Suzuka by the nickname Suzukaze.

IF YOU PUT HER IN CHARGE, THE WHOLE TEAM WILL FALL APART.
SUZUKAZE CAN'T HANDLE THE PRESSURE.
KAZUKI TSUDA
EIGHTH GRADER
(AGE FOURTEEN)

## Prefectural meet, page 6

Japan is divided into numerous prefectures that function something like states do in the United States.

## K fest and Shou-xxx-kan, page 22

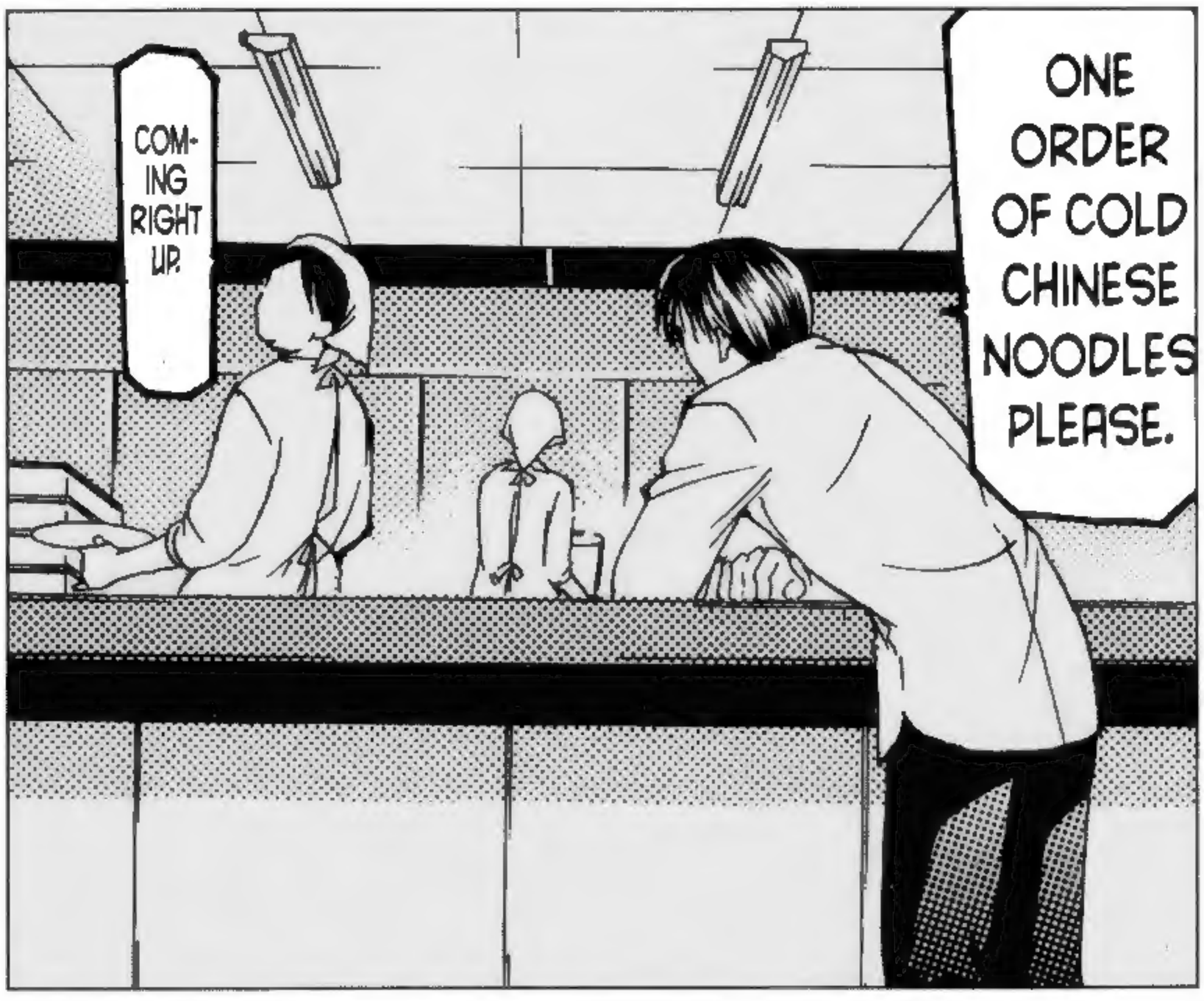
K fest  probably stands for Kodansha Fest. Kodansha is the Japanese publisher of *Suzuka.* Shou-xxx-kan is probably a reference to one of Kodansha's publishing competitors, Shougakkan. Shougakkan publishes manga and children's books. This was probably a dinosaur exhibit for kids that was sponsored by the publisher.

## Cicadas, page 117

The loud chirping of the cicadas marks Japan's hot, humid summers.

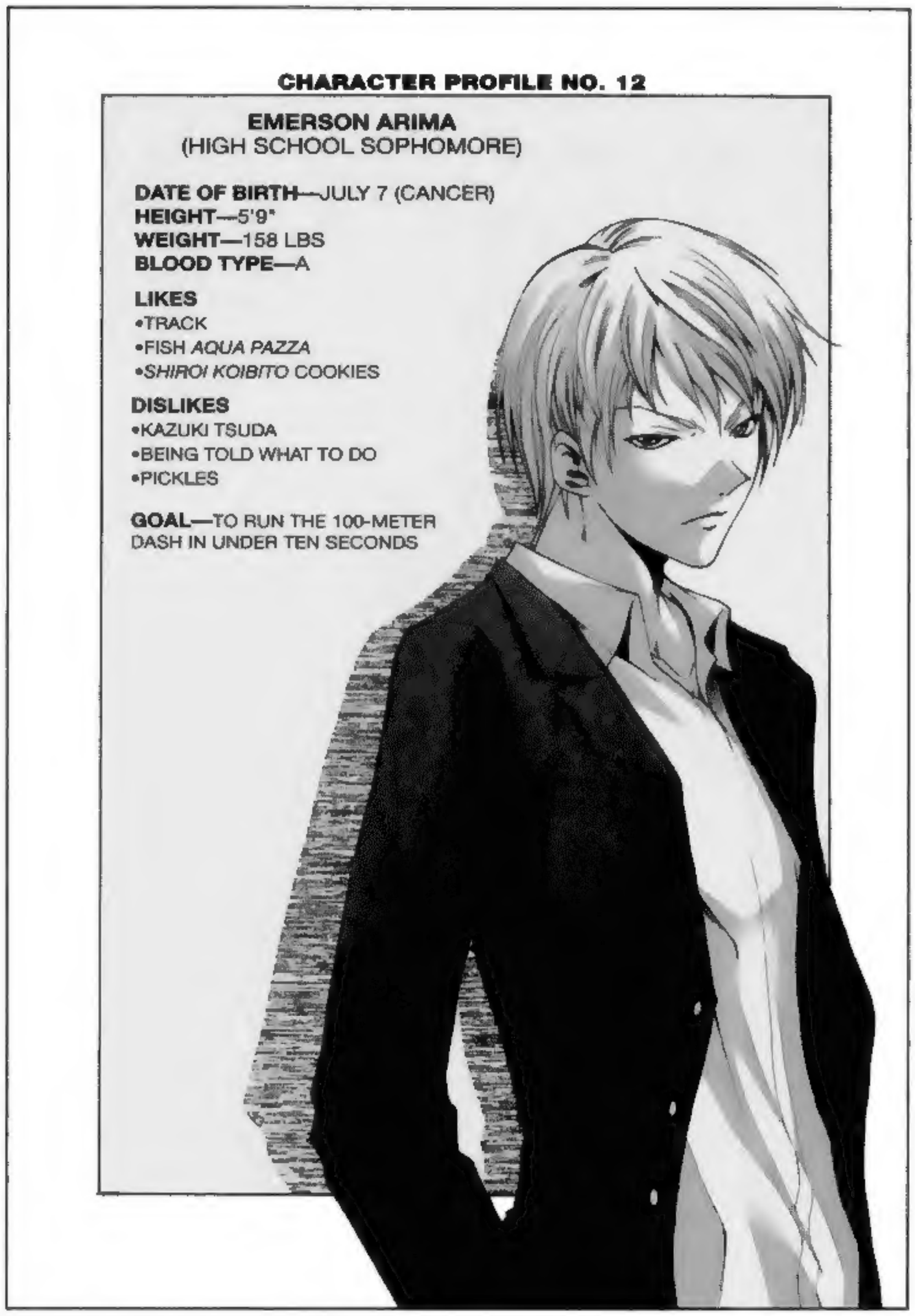
## Cold Chinese noodles, page 149

Yamato is ordering *hiyashi chuuka* or cold Chinese-style noodles. This dish features noodles topped with cucumber, eggs, ham, and a sweet-and-sour sauce. It's a popular summer dish.



## ***Aqua pazza* and *shiroi koibito*, page 162**

*Aqua pazza* is an Italian style of cooking fish. The fish is cooked in a broth of salted water with garlic and spices and then served in the broth. *Shiroi koibito* is a famous kind of cream-filled cookie from the Hokkaido region of Japan.



# RACING HEART

After joining the track team to impress the gorgeous Suzuka, Yamato falls flat on his face. So now that his plan has backfired, Yamato's avoiding track practice like the plague. After skipping three days in a row, an out-of-shape Yamato finds himself at the first big track meet of the year. Worse, when a hotshot runner picks on Suzuka, Yamato challenges the creep to a race in front of a huge crowd. Only later does our clueless hero learn that his opponent is none other than the top high-school sprinter in the nation. What has Yamato gotten himself into this time?

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